



Demodectic Mange

Pets are members of the family and it is our pleasure and honor to treat your family member. Your pet has been diagnosed with a skin disorder known as demodectic mange. This handout will help introduce you to some of the terms and treatments that accompany this diagnosis.

What is demodectic mange and what are the symptoms?

It is caused by microscopic mites that live deep in your pet's skin around hair roots and accompanying oil glands. The mite can be present in small numbers on healthy pets and cause no problems. A disturbance in a pet's body (usually immune system problems) can cause symptoms of demodectic mange to appear, including hair loss, skin redness or swelling, and occasionally itching, crusting, and secondary bacterial infection in the affected area(s). Demodectic mange often appears around the eyes, over the top of the head, or on the feet. An important skin test, a "skin scraping," is necessary to confirm the diagnosis. These mites can be observed microscopically in the test sample.

Is demodectic mange contagious to me or my other family members?

No, these mites are not considered to be contagious to people or other Pets.

How will the doctor treat my pet for demodectic mange?

The approved method of treatment is a series of medicated dips with a product called Mitaban. Alternative treatments are also available. Your veterinarian has carefully considered the benefits and risks associated with all the possible demodectic mange treatments. In some cases, treatment with ivermectin (an oral medication) is recommended.

What is ivermectin?

Ivermectin has been used in veterinary medicine since the mid- seventies and is the ingredient in a commonly prescribed heartworm preventative. This medication has been FDA tested and approved for use as heartworm prevention in dogs at a lower dosage than is used for treatment of demodectic mange. To be effective, the dosage used for demodex therapy is 6-8 times the heartworm prevention dosage and is often given daily.

Is Ivermectin a safe treatment for demodectic mange?

Ivermectin has gone through extensive clinical trials. Dermatology experts have used ivermectin for treatment of demodectic mange for 8–10 years and have published extensive dosing recommendations

in veterinary medical journals and textbooks. Certain breeds are sensitive to ivermectin at these higher levels. In this case, your doctor may recommend using an alternative medication called milbemycin to treat your Pet for this skin disease.

What are the most common breeds that are sometimes sensitive to ivermectin treatments?

The most commonly sensitive breeds include Australian shepherds, Collies, Border collies, Shelties (Shetland sheepdogs), and occasionally, Old English sheepdogs. On rare occasions, other dogs may unpredictably show sensitivity to ivermectin.

What symptoms should I be aware of in regards to sensitivity?

Symptoms of sensitivity may include lack of appetite, listlessness, depression, vomiting, diarrhea, tremors, lack of coordination, seizures, and in very rare instances death. To monitor for possible side effects, ivermectin will be introduced to your pet gradually. **If any of these symptoms show up in your pet, stop the medication immediately, and call our hospital.** If we are closed, please contact the nearest veterinary emergency facility immediately.

Demodectic mange can lead to secondary infections and irritation that could make it impossible for your pet to live comfortably. The good news is this disease can usually be cured with consistent therapy and visits to your veterinarian. As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please contact Lake Shore Pet Hospital.