



*Protecting and enhancing the lives of lost,  
unwanted and homeless animals.*

## **Sarcoptic Mange (Scabies)**

### **General Information**

Sarcoptic mange (*Sarcoptes scabiei*) is one species of mite that resides in hair follicles and skin layers of dogs, cats, and humans. There are over 50 species of mites that inhabit these hosts, however most mites are host specific and do not tend to thrive on other animals outside of their life cycle.

The term mangy refers to a ragged, uneven coat with damaged skin that results from little mites affecting the skin and hair follicles.

Sarcoptic mange is highly communicable that digs tunnels in the skin and cause intense itching, inflammation and hair loss.

The mite that inhabits cats is known as *Notoedres cati*. This mite will also live on other hosts but can not reproduce so dies during its 3 week life cycle. Symptoms often disappear once the mites die unless there has been alternate exposure.

### **Recognition of disease**

The main symptoms of Sarcoptic mange are:

- Intense itching (pruritis)
- Inflammation of the skin
- Scabbed areas, crusts, thickening of skin
- Secondary infection (pyoderma)

### **Prevention**

#### **General Policy**

Sarcoptic mange is a treatable condition; however it is zoonotic and must be treated with caution. It is highly contagious and can live in the environment for up to 21 days if the right conditions are met.

#### **Initial Response**

#### *Animal Placement*

**Whistler Animals Galore Society**  
**P.O. Box 274 Whistler BC V0N 1B0**  
**604-935-8364 [www.thewagway.com](http://www.thewagway.com)**

If an animal is suspected of having Sarcoptic mange, they are to be taken into the veterinary clinic immediately to have a skin scraping. The animal must be placed in isolation and treated with caution. All toys and laundry are to be washed every day and are to be kept separated from other blankets and toys generally used. Toys must be soaked in bleach and water solution for at least ten minutes and laundry is done separately with bleach added to the load.

Animals need to be treated for two weeks past the typical cycle of the mite to ensure that they have been killed.

### Treatment

Treatment for Sarcoptic mange usually consists of Ivermectin (Ivomec) as prescribed by the veterinarian. If secondary infection is present, antibiotics may also be prescribed. Pyoben baths and omega oils (added into food) can also help soothe the skin and reduce itchiness. Ivomec has shown to be toxic to some breeds of dogs (Herding).

Other treatments are Lime Sulfur dips, which are typically done in 5 day intervals.

For humans, cortisone cream can often help the itchiness, however extensive treatment is not often prescribed as the mite will die within a three week period.

There have been reports of kittens dying from Ivomec. A veterinarian will prescribe an alternative treatment for kittens or growing cats

### Cleaning

The most effective way to clean the environment is to use bleach and water solution. All toys and blankets are to be disinfected on a regular basis. To help avoid exposing other animals, limit the animal to the isolation area and do not introduce a new animal to the area that they have inhabited until at least 36 hours has passed.

The mite can live for 6 days without a host, but up to 21 days if it is a warm and moist environment. However, the mite is only considered infective for 36 hours. After that time period, they may join a host, but be unable to reproduce.

If the mite is present in a home setting, to avoid re-exposure an environmental pesticide can be used.

### Public Safety

It is essential that a sign is posted at the shelter door that Sarcoptic mange or Scabies is present in the shelter. Technically, a person could bring the mite home on their clothes, or transmit it to another animal in the shelter quite easily (brushes, bowls, blankets etc.)

It is important to have only shelter workers deal with the infected animal and follow infectious disease handling protocol.

### **Monitoring and Recovery**

Life mites may remain after the severe itching ceases. Continue treatments at least two weeks after remission, approximately 4-6 weeks.

All animals in contact need to be treated, or if protocol hasn't been followed, any animal that has had contact with that person or item needs to be treated.

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Continue with skin scrapings as recommended by the veterinarian. If the symptoms do not improve, see the veterinarian as soon as possible.

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