

## **Demodectic Mange**

### **(Demodicosis)**

#### **General Information**

Demodicosis is a skin disease caused by a microscopic parasitic mite. Demodectic mites are found in small numbers in the hair follicles of normal dogs. In dogs with demodicosis, however, these mites proliferate, and large numbers inhabit the skin and hair follicles. Dogs may acquire mites from their mother 2 to 3 days after birth.

Demodicosis may involve only one or two small areas of skin (localized mange) or large areas of the body (generalized mange). Juvenile-onset demodicosis occurs in dogs 3 to 12 months old, and the short-haired breeds are most commonly affected. Adult-onset demodicosis generally occurs in dogs more than 5 years old and is often associated with internal disease or cancer. Some dogs are genetically predisposed to the generalized form, and breeding these dogs is not recommended.

Localized demodicosis is the mildest form. Usually, only a few areas of hair loss on the head or front legs occur. Most dogs with the localized form recover completely.

Generalized demodicosis is serious and often difficult to treat. Large areas of the body may be affected, and often the affected areas are also infected by bacteria. In these cases, the skin is red, crusty and warm, and has many pustules. It may bleed easily and have a strong, rancid odor. While most of these cases are curable, some can only be controlled, and periodic re-treatment is necessary.

Demodicosis can also occur as a chronic foot infection in mature dogs.

#### **Important Points in Treatment**

1. *Medication:* All medication and treatments must be given as directed and on schedule. Please call the doctor if you cannot complete any treatments or doubt the adequacy of your treatment.
2. *Diet:* Follow the instructions checked.  
 Feed the normal diet.  
 A special diet is necessary. Feed: \_\_\_\_\_
3. *Activity:* With localized demodicosis, your dog's activity need not be restricted. With generalized demodicosis, activity is restricted to avoid irritation and trauma to the inflamed skin. Restrict your dog's activity for \_\_\_\_\_ weeks.
4. Periodic rechecks and skin scrapings to test for active mites are necessary. With the generalized form, bacterial cultures from the skin may be needed to determine the most effective antibiotic.

#### **Notify the Doctor if Any of the Following Occur**

- Your dog's sores enlarge rapidly and general skin health worsens.
- Your dog's appetite and activity decrease.
- Your dog's condition recurs after an apparent recovery.