



MANGE / SCABIES

ABOUT THE DISEASE

Scabies is a specific **mange** skin condition caused by a microscopic parasitic mite living on the skin surface.

Two species exist:

- *Sarcoptes scabiei*
 - Traditional canine **mange/scabies**.
 - This parasite is potentially contagious to humans, ferrets, and felines, but is of limited significance and typically self-resolves.
 - Causes sarcoptic **mange** or canine **scabies**.
- *Notoedres cati*
 - Traditional feline **mange/scabies**.
 - Typically only seen in outdoor cats living in southeast USA (Florida/Louisiana) and generally does not spread to other species.
 - Causes notoedric **mange** or feline **scabies**.

Sarcoptes generally affects areas of the dog's skin where the hair is very thin, such as the ear tips, elbows, ankles, belly, and chest. In severe cases it can spread to affect the whole body. Aside from a unique distribution, there are no specific skin lesions that are unique to sarcoptic **mange**. Patients may exhibit severe pruritus (itchiness), abrasions from scratching, sores/lesions, secondary skin infections, and sometimes firm, black crusting.

Notoedres typically causes extreme pruritus of the ears, head, and neck. This is why sometimes, notoedric **mange** is also referred to as head **mange**.

OBTAINING A DIAGNOSIS

Mange/scabies is diagnosed by microscopic examination of debris obtained by performing a superficial skin scraping but is more sensitive in feline than canine **scabies**. Approximately half of canine patients will test false-negative.

If a canine patient has signs consistent with sarcoptic **mange**, they will be treated, and the diagnosis is made with improvement.

TREATMENT

Several commercially available medications are available for the treatment of sarcoptic & notoedric **mange**. Although feline patients incidentally infected will often resolve on their own without treatment.

The goal should be to kill the mites as well as treat secondary skin lesions present with other medications (antibiotics, anti-inflammatories, steroids, etc.). Medicated baths may also be necessary to help remove the crusts and scabs.

- Selamectin (Revolution®) – Monthly topical treatment
 - Appears to be safe, even in Ivermectin-sensitive breeds
- Imidacloprid-Moxidectin (Advantage Multi®) – Monthly topical treatment
 - Can be used in patients as young as 7 weeks of age
- Ivermectin – Very effective and typically curative when treated 2-4 times, 2 weeks apart
 - Patient's heartworm status should first be identified
- Lime Sulfur Dips – Highly effective when performed 7 days apart
 - Also safe for young animals

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Initial treatment can trigger a stronger pruritic (itchy) reaction but will resolve a few days after treatment.
- Prevent contact with other animals to reduce spreading of the parasite.
 - Have exposed animals examined and possibly treated preventatively.
- Clean the environment and wash or replace all bedding, collars, and harnesses.
 - Flea sprays and foggers are generally effective against **scabies**.
- Seek examination by a human physician if human family members exhibit red, itchy skin lesions.