

Notoedric Mange

The Pet Health Care Library

(Feline Scabies)

Notoedric mange is the scabby, scaly, skin disease resulting from infection by the feline mite *Notoedres cati*. Notoedres mites are closely related to Sarcoptic mange mites of dogs and thus the two infections have some similarity. Both conditions typically begin with itchy crusts and scales on the ear margins. Notoedric mange progresses to involve the face and ultimately, if the skin disease is ignored, it will cover the cat's entire body. The term "scabies" is somewhat colloquial and refers to a mite infection with any of the mites in the *Sarcoptidae* family. In the United States, this infection is considered rare with regional hot beds of infection. Many veterinary dermatologists never see this condition in their careers.

How is Diagnosis Confirmed?

A scraping of the crusty skin can be examined under the microscope. Mites and/or their eggs are generally not difficult to detect if a pet has them; still, their absence does not rule Notoedric mange out. Sometimes a trial course of treatment is needed to fully rule out the infection. The mite is highly inflammatory, hence the intense itching.

Can the Infection be Transmitted to other Pets or to Humans?

Yes, it can. Notoedres mites are spread by touch and they can certainly infect humans, dogs, or even rabbits. They do not live off their host for more than a few days at best, thus transmission is generally by direct contact with an infected individual.

Treatment

There are several options for the treatment of this condition.

DIPPING - In the past, a series of six or seven lime sulfur baths or Amitraz (Mitaban) dips were used to control this infection. This certainly works but cats' general dislike of bathing created need for a more convenient treatment. Furthermore, lime sulfur has an extremely objectionable smell and will discolor fur. Amitraz tends to produce sedation in some patients and headaches in some humans.

IVERMECTIN - This medication, which is usually given as an injection, has become the most common treatment due to its convenience and efficacy. Treatment is typically weekly or every two weeks for a month and recovery is prompt. Consider though, that the cat may become reinfected if other cats in the household are infected but not yet showing symptoms, or if the cat is an outdoor cat and likely to again associate with the infected individual who transmitted the infection to him in the first place.

SELAMECTIN (Revolution) - This topical medication was designed for flea, heartworm, and intestinal parasite control. In dogs, it is approved for control of Sarcoptic mange mites but due to the rarity of *Notoedres cati* infection, the manufacturer is unlikely to pursue the expensive process of gaining FDA approval for this condition. Still, selamectin seems to be effective. This product appears to be most beneficial in prevention of future infections (it is meant to be used monthly on an indefinite basis for flea control) and provides a convenient



An example of classical Notoedric Mange symptoms

means to treat other housemate cats.

It is important to consider that when one cat at home is diagnosed with this condition, all cats at home may require treatment.



Pete Rose before treatment



Pete Rose two weeks after a single ivermectin injection

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