



Snake Mite - *Ophionyssus natricis*

Mites are most often introduced to vivarium pets by introduction of a new, infected snake or substrate like untreated piece of wood.

- Heavy infestations can cause
 - Anaemia, death and Dysecdysis
 - Trauma (esp. ocular trauma) due to rubbing associated with irritation.
 - Mites can also transmit disease
 - *Aesomonas hydrophila* - pneumonia
 - Viral diseases
- They can cause papular dermatitis in people
- They are very small but can be Visualised between scales or buy gently wipe reptile's body over white sheet.

Mite Control

Eradication can be difficult and must involve treatment of the animal and enclosure.

Suggested treatments include Pyrethrin or Trichlorfon solution.

These should be used in a well ventilated area and the use of Protective clothing.

Trichlorfon (Neguvon, Bayer) solutions

- 0.15% and 1% Trichlorfon solutions
- safe and effective
- Not recommended for use in juvenile snakes or those reptiles undergoing ecdysis

Pyrethnns

- Resmethnn 0.35% (1 min contact time for reptile. 5-10 minutes for enclosure)
- Orange Medic Head Lice Treatment (Emerald Forest) (0.2%, 2 mg/ml Permethrin) diluted 1:1 with warm water — contact time for reptiles is 2-5 minutes

Treating the Animal

- Lizards — Place artificial tears in eyes (snakes have spectacle and don't require this)
- Spray reptile's body with solution
- Wipe reptile's head with cloth soaked in solution
- Ensure solution is applied to crevices around eyelids, corners of mouth, arm pits of lizards and outside of cloaca
- Position animal's head downwards to prevent solution entering mouth or nostrils
- Solution should remain on reptile for 2-5 minutes
- Rinse solution off with warm water
- Place reptile in mite-free container until it can be placed back into enclosure
- Treat reptile once a week for 3 weeks and then every 14 days for a total of 45 days.

Treating Enclosure

- Remove reptile
- Clean enclosure and sprayed with 3% bleach solution
- Cage furniture should be discarded or soaked in the 3% bleach solution
- The enclosure is then rinsed and sprayed with a Pyrethrin or Trichlorfon solution. Allow to stand for 30 minutes then rinse thoroughly with water. The enclosure is then allowed to air out and dry before housing the reptile in it.
- Ideally allow enclosure to remain empty for 45 days