



SARCOPTIC MANGE

This disease is caused by a mite called *Sarcoptes canis*. It is extremely contagious and is usually contracted by direct contact with an infested fox or dog. Affected animals have usually been in contact with foxes, and / or have had access to bushland.

This disease is transmissible to in-contact humans and / or dogs.

SIGNS :

The dog is usually extremely itchy. The appearance of the dog's skin will depend on how long the mites have been present. Self trauma causes most of the lesions seen, and results in scratches and scabs / crusts. These will get worse with time. The most commonly affected areas tend to be the edges of the ears, elbows, stomach and legs / feet.

DIAGNOSIS :

Skin scrapings are taken, but this mite is very difficult to find, so diagnosis is often based on a process of elimination, the presenting signs and response to treatment.

TREATMENT :

There are a couple of different treatments available, including use of rinses for several weeks or an injection administered by your vet weekly. It is very important that doses be given weekly as treatments kill adult mites but not eggs. So in treating weekly you are killing the mites hatching from eggs but this needs to be done before they have time to lay more eggs.

Antibiotics and / or anti-inflammatories may also be administered if necessary.

All in contact dogs should be treated, as they may act as carriers.

TRANSMISSION TO HUMANS :

In-contact humans can become infected. The mite will not breed on humans, but it can cause dermatitis. If you suspect that you may be affected, visit your doctor. Ongoing contact with the affected dog is necessary to maintain infection on people. Once the dog has received effective treatment, it will not be able to pass on anymore mites to in-contact humans. It is important to minimise contact with the affected dog, wear gloves when handling and observe good basic hygiene.

Disinfect all areas where the dog has been, including bedding as well as leads and collars. These items should not be used for at least one week.