

Canine Mange: A Holistic Approach

IMPORTANT NOTE: The below remedies are FOR DOGS ONLY. Some of the below protocols would be very dangerous for cats.

The below suggestions are useful for both Sarcoptic mange (*Sarcoptes scabiei*) and Demodectic mange (AKA Demodex). It is important to be fastidious about cleanliness when dealing with either issue. Washing the animal's bedding, collars and clothing, etc. will help to clear up the issue faster and, in the case of Sarcoptic mange, limit the possibility of the mange spreading to other household members.

Demodex is not contagious and only effects canines. Sarcoptic Mange can be contagious to susceptible humans, dogs and cats, though the infection will not progress or sustain itself on humans and cats as *Sarcoptes scabiei* must live on a canine host in order to complete its lifecycle. Humans, dogs and cats with **healthy immune systems** should be able to resist infection, but it's better to be safe than sorry and keep the environment and animals clean until the issue is resolved. Stress is a big factor, too. Animals living in the same household may be experiencing the same environmental or life stressors that caused the sick animal to develop mange, and bringing a new animal into the household can be a stressful period for resident animals.

I HIGHLY recommend consulting with a classical homeopath in either scenario.

I have treated Demodex mange many, many times in rescue dogs without ever having to resort to using the chemical treatments. I have resolved both minor cases, and severely neglected dogs with generalized demodex and deep, oozing staph infections so bad that the dog could not even use her hind legs. If your dog has a small area of mange, it should be easy to resolve with the following protocol...

1) **DIET:** Feed 100% grain-free raw, whole food diet with the addition of a good, high quality fish-body/wild Salmon oil EFA and natural Vitamin E. Give 100 IU Vit E for every 1,000 mg of Salmon Oil. If the animal is severely disabled/ill or new to a raw diet, add a high quality digestive enzyme and probiotic supplement. If they are too ill to tolerate a raw diet, then feed a home-prepared cooked diet using fresh foods until they can tolerate raw. As much as is possible, feed only pastured, organic, and grass-finished meats.

2) **VACCINATIONS:** Do not vaccinate an animal with mange – period. This is huge. Mange is almost always a direct result of vaccinations. Dogs with mange are expressing that their immune system has been insulted/damaged by vaccines, medications, and/or a poor diet. Dogs can be genetically predisposed to being especially sensitive to vaccines and mange is a common symptom of this, so you need to consider future vaccinations carefully. Discuss future vaccination decisions with your holistic vet. Non-vaccinated strays can develop mange due to living in an immune damaging environment (starvation/inadequate diet, environmental stress, living in filth, lack of security and kindness/love, etc.).

Do not give any chemical "preventative" medications; heartworm pills, flea/tick preventatives, dips or sprays, etc. These poison insults make your pet's immune system weaker/strained so they are unable to mount a healthy immune response to disease.

3) **EXERCISE/LIFESTYLE:** Plenty of daily outdoor exercise; for young dogs this usually means 1-2 hour off-leash hikes, beach walks, and lots of fresh air. Do not expose them to extreme temperatures, and only exercise them as much as they can tolerate without being physically stressed - let them guide you as to how much they can handle, never push them to do too much. In severely debilitated animals, you will have to start with short, frequent walks at first. Try and walk them only in natural areas, away from roads and pollution.

4) **ENVIRONMENT:** Clean their bedding in hot water every 3 days (use sheets or towels to cover their dog bed(s) or crate pad to make this easier). Do not use dryer sheets or chemical laundry detergents; use a natural, unscented detergent. Do not smoke or use chemicals on or around these animals. Provide a clean, loving, peaceful, stress-free environment in which your dog can heal and become stronger. Limit exposure to electromagnetic fields (EMFs), as much as possible. EMFs are produced by electric appliances such as televisions, microwaves, etc. Electromagnetic radiation from wireless devices can be harmful, too.

5) **GROOMING:** Give once a week baths with a very gentle, natural shampoo. For example, see our Rara Avis Uber Natural Shampoo. There's also Flutterby Organics and CyberCanine – these are all good brands with high quality ingredients. Do not use chemical or medicated shampoos, sprays or dips. Make bath time fun, or at least not scary or stressful. Talk in soothing tones, move slowly, and handle your pet gently and respectfully to create a calming, "spa-like" experience rather than a scary torture treatment! Follow baths with play time and treats.

6) **TOPICALS:** My Rara Avis Mite-B-Gone oil is very useful for this issue. I have also provided a Lemon Skin Tonic recipe and how to prepare a Lavender EO oil blend for a topical application below.

If you follow the above protocol, your dog will get better. I have had full recoveries happen in a matter of weeks, but most dogs take a few months. Basically you are allowing for their immune system to recover and allowing for their skin flora to rebalance, and this can take time. So long as it's not getting worse, you can continue home treatment. If it gets worse instead of better, consult with your holistic vet for assistance.

Some dogs with minor cases will get better with zero treatment by the time they are about 12-14 months old. The thought is that they simply "outgrow" the mange, but my opinion is that it takes about this long to finally recover from the puppy vaccines that put their body into this compromised/crisis state, and their immune systems are also finally maturing by this age.

You can also add a few supplements to the above regime. Adding the supplements alone won't do it though - it's the overall holistic treatment/ husbandry that matters, so you need to consider their lifestyle, diet, and overall husbandry first. Supplement information can be found in the below email I wrote to a list member of one of the lists I run. I hope this information is useful and helps you to help your dog!

Demodectic mites are normally present on all dogs raised by/with other dogs, but is normally kept under control by a healthy immune system. It is not contagious. Demodex only develops into a problem when the dog's immune system is depressed or compromised by the stress of being in a shelter

environment, immune-harming medications, poor husbandry (food/environment), and/or vaccines. Certain breeds are more susceptible to this condition - my opinion is that these breeds or individuals are more susceptible to the damaging effects of vaccinations. Dogs that develop mange should never be vaccinated again, or should be vaccinated by the minimum requirements dictated by your state's laws.

Demodex is fairly common in young dogs/puppies under the age of 12 months. Demodex infection is common, because (at least in holistic circles) it is considered to be one of the negative results of puppy vaccinations. Most dogs will "outgrow" demodex by 12-14 months old on their own - when a more mature immune system is developed and able to handle the imbalance, without any assistance whatsoever. Usually, these are dogs whose vital force/immune systems are able to recover from the damage vaccinations have done to their system.

Some dogs have a much harder time with these early assaults, and demodex can develop into a generalized state where it covers the majority of their body and can, rarely, become life-threatening. These dogs can still recover when their systems are properly supported and they are given the chance - by not further assaulting their system with medications and vaccinations. If you are dealing with a more than mild case of demodex, you absolutely must consult with a qualified homeopath. Find a list of homeopaths at the end of this message.

Feeding them wholesome, clean, fresh foods, living in a clean environment, regular bathing, minimal stress, and daily access to fresh air, sunshine and exercise is critical. Many, many dogs in rescue suffer from demodex and I have treated many dogs without the use of chemical remedies. My opinion is that the chemical medications further complicate the issue, mask the symptoms, and further damage the immune system. Oftentimes, the medications will appear to have worked, but this brief respite from the disease only lasts for a short period and when the mange returns, it comes back like gangbusters - or at least worse than the first time.

Don Hamilton and Richard Pitcairn's books both have excellent sections about mange that speaks about not only the how's and whys, and why allopathic care for this (esp. in young dogs) is more damaging than helpful in the long-run, but also gives recommendations as to the treatment using safe, gentle home remedies. I highly recommend you purchase one or both of these books and read these sections. Their recommendations are similar to what I have listed here.

Supplements you can add to your pup's diet to help counter the mite overgrowth are as follows:

- **Zinc**, in the form of either raw, ground pumpkin seeds or a chelated zinc tablet, 10 to 30 milligrams/day
- **Vitamin C**, 250-1000 mgs twice/day
- 100 to 400 IU of **Vitamin E** daily (discontinue use before surgery)
- ½ to 3 teaspoons of **Lecithin**/day

You may also consider the following supplements that can help with a variety of immune system conditions:

- **SeaCure**
- **Transfer Factor Plus Advanced Formula**

Typically, you can rub fresh, organic lemon juice on the affected area every day or make a tea infusion of thinly sliced lemons (3 lemons to a quart of boiling water) - let steep overnight, strain and store in the fridge. Pour or spray this 'lemon tea' on the dog's bald/patchy areas 2x/day.

Alternatively, you could add a high quality organic lavender essential oil (10-15 drops) in a base of almond oil or jojoba oil (1/2 oz.) and apply this EO formula to the affected areas. Use as many drops of the oil necessary to cover the areas of skin where the hair is thinning or bald; apply twice a day to these areas.

At only a few months old, the last thing you want to do is suppress minor symptoms such as these and further compromise your puppy's immune system. He/she is just a pup! The best thing you can do is counter their current state of low-resistance/immunity with care that will further strengthen their immunity and lay the foundation for a healthy, capable immune system that can swiftly handle something as minor as demodex, and also manage future symptoms that might be more complicated and serious as he/she grows into adulthood.

Consulting with a good homeopath will help your dog tremendously in this situation.

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If you suspect an animal is ill, please consult with a holistic veterinarian. To find a holistic veterinarian in your area, search the referral listings on one of these valuable sites:

American Holistic Veterinary Medical Association
American Academy of Veterinary Acupuncture
The Academy of Veterinary Homeopathy