

Ear Mites (Otodectic Mange) in pets



Image 1: Typical view of the cat's ear with Ear Mites

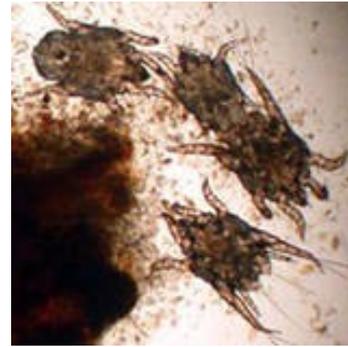


Image 2: *Otodectes cynotis* (microscopic view)

Ear mites are external tiny parasites that live out their life cycle mostly inside the ear canal, where they feed on the skin debris. Causing irritation and inflammation, ear mites can infect the external and internal ear canal, and lead to more serious ear infection if left untreated.

The most common ear mite of cats and dogs is *Otodectes cynotis*, and therefore an infestation with ear mites is sometimes called "Otodectic Mange".

Ear mites should not be confused with the mites that cause Sarcoptic Mange, which is an entirely different disease, but one whose signs can include crusty ear tips.

Highly contagious, ear mites are often passed from pet to pet in casual contact at home or outside. Though they can infect both cats and dogs, cats are more commonly affected than dogs. Ear mites are responsible for more than 50% of all feline ear infections. Humans are generally immune to ear mites (rarely, however, they may cause a short-lived but very itchy rash).

The entire ear mite life cycle takes place on the host animal (development from egg to adult shape takes about 3 weeks), although mites can survive for a limited time in the environment.

Most common signs/symptoms of the ear mites are:

- scratching at ears or head shaking, head tilt
- dark waxy or crusty discharge from the ears, frequently look like coffee grounds
- hair loss with scratches or scabs behind ear

Sometimes intense scratching and head shaking can cause rupture of the blood vessels inside your pet's ear, which is known as ear hematoma (often requires surgery to correct).

It is very important to avoid self-diagnosis (certain types of bacterial infections could mimic the symptoms of ear mites). Bring your pet to your veterinarian for accurate diagnosis and most suitable treatment plan.

The treatment usually starts with a thorough cleaning of the ears to clear the discharge, calm the irritation and remove some of the mites. The next step is the usage of medicated ear drops, usually twice daily ("Canaural"-is the most common brand of ear drops used). These should be administered for a minimum of 2-3 weeks.

On top of this, it is highly recommended to apply spot-on solutions against mites directly to the skin in between the shoulder blades. This medication is usually called "Stronghold", "Revolution" or "Advocate". This helps to avoid reinfection of the mites since it is known that ear mites could live on the skin, as well as outside the ears.

To avoid the mites spreading from one pet to another, all pets in your home should be treated at the same time, even if they are not showing symptoms.

Routine cleaning of your pet's ears will alert you to any early problems. If your pet has recently recovered from ear mites, be sure to thoroughly clean their toys, bedding, and check other pets for infestation.

If you are unsure about your pet's ears or would like our doctors at the Sama Veterinary Clinic to have a look into your pets ears, please give us a call on 244 90 537 to book an appointment. Please also remember that we are always available for you out of clinic hours with our Emergency Services and you can reach us on mobile number 9777 444 6.