

Demodicosis in Dogs & Cats

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DOGS

Localized demodicosis

- Occurs primarily in puppies
- Mites found only in lesional areas; lesions focal & limited (1–4 sites)
- Signs include focal areas of hair loss, erythema, hyperpigmentation, & follicular plugging (comedones)
- Pruritus varies



Juvenile generalized demodicosis

- Mean age of onset 6 months
- Begins as localized demodicosis & becomes more diffuse
- Mites can be found in lesional and nonlesional areas; all stages of life cycle are commonly found
- Signs include hair loss, erythema, hyperpigmentation, papular rash, follicular plugging, concurrent superficial or deep pyoderma (furunculosis), pain, fever, matting of hair coat, & skin exudation
- Pruritus is variable
- In some patients, presents only as deep pododermatitis (swelling, lameness, pain, exudation, lichenification, proliferation of pedal tissue) & generalized or regional lymphadenopathy
- Dogs can be septic & severely debilitated by disease

Adult-onset demodicosis

- May be focal or generalized
- Occurs in dogs with concurrent systemic illness
- Proliferation of mites may precede signs of systemic illness
- In my experience, dogs with adult-onset demodicosis have no history of demodicosis as a young dog

D injai demodicosis

- Associated with wire-haired fox terrier dogs that have dorsal greasy skin of the trunk
- Usually pruritic and may be concurrent with atopic dermatitis⁶
- Some dogs, especially terriers, may present with intense pruritus⁷

CATS

Otic demodicosis

- Affects cats of any age; common in kittens
- Signs include ceruminous discharge & pruritus



D gatoi demodicosis

- Can occur in cats of any age
- Common signs are pruritus & evidence of contagion
- Can present as symmetric alopecia
- Pruritus can be severe & lead to self-trauma
- Often introduced into household after adoption of a new cat or kitten from a rescue center, shelter, or other high-density population

D cati demodicosis

- Not known to be contagious
- Signs can be similar to those of *D gatoi*
- Most often associated with systemic illness (eg, diabetes mellitus) or long-term use of glucocorticoids & progestins

Mixed infections

- Not uncommon