

NON-CONTAGIOUS INFECTIOUS DISEASE IN
ANIMAL SHELTERS

CANINE DEMODICOSIS

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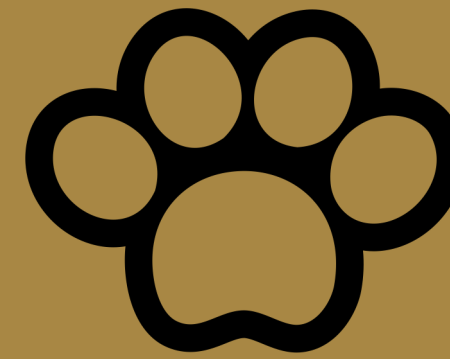


What is Canine Demodicosis?

Canine Demodicosis also known as Demodex Canis is a non-infectious skin disease caused by Demodex mites, these mites live in small numbers in hair follicles and sebaceous glands of dogs.

This is often treatable but is not always prioritized in shelters.

Common in puppies, sick or stressed dogs. These dogs usually have weakened immune systems due to illness, malnutrition or medications that are susceptible to demodectic mange.



How It's Recognized and Diagnosed

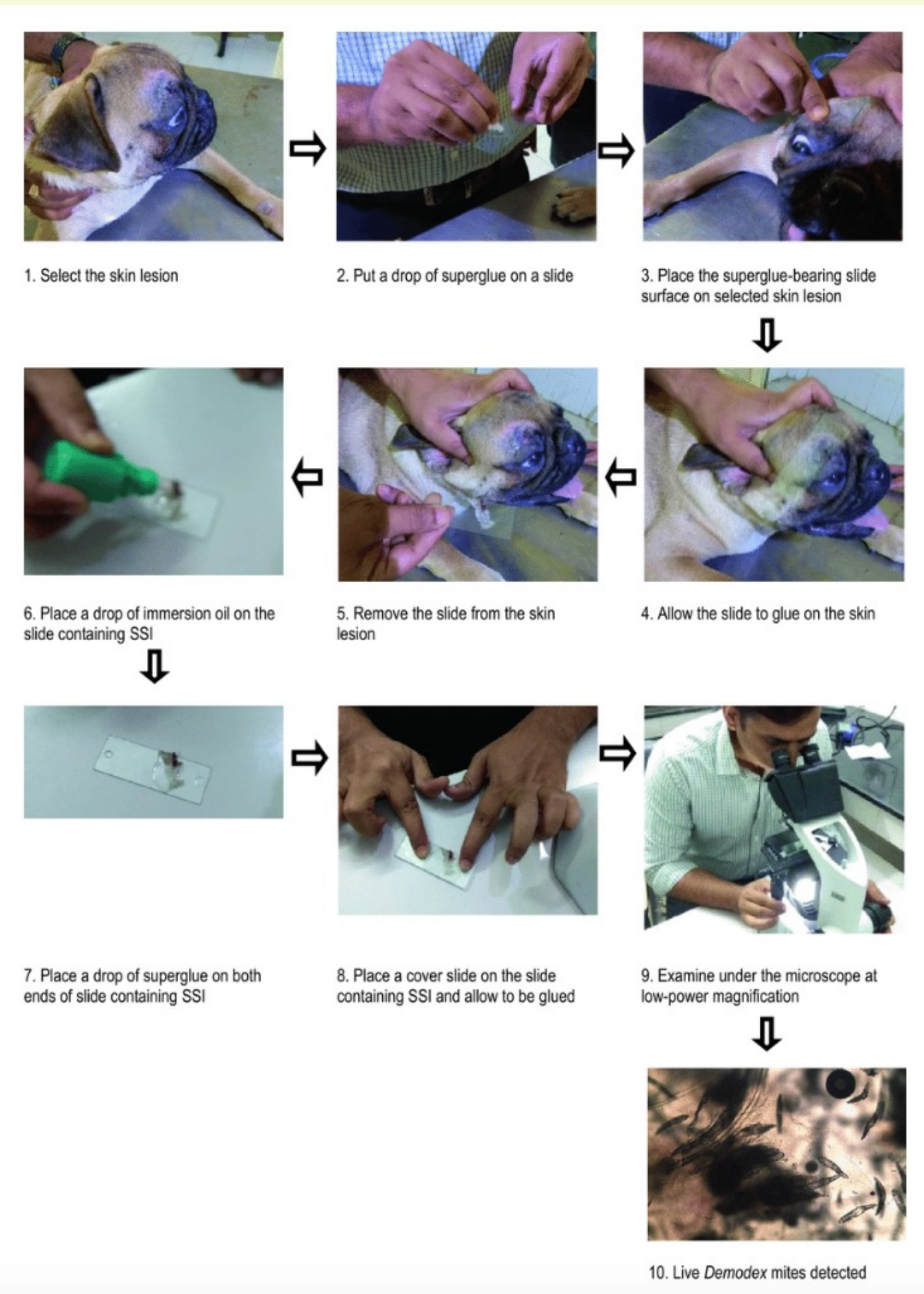
Recognized

A shelter staff may recognize Demodicosis in dogs by skin appearance and hair loss. Dogs with this skin condition are surprisingly not itchy, even though it leads to 1 to 5 small, isolated areas that are usually hairless, red and scaly.

Diagnosed

Normally, to confirm this condition, the shelter must perform a skin scraping. This is a deep skin scrape to visualize mites under a microscope. This skin scraping is performed by a trained veterinary technician in the shelter. The technician will perform and examine the skin sample on a microscope. Mites that are typically present in large numbers can be visualized by the veterinary technician.

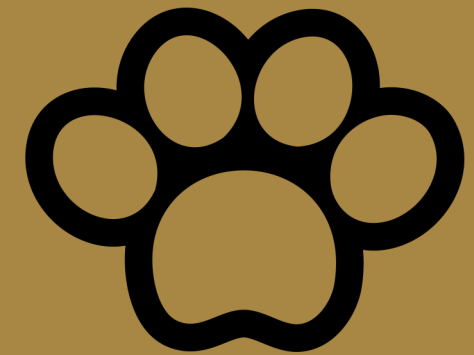
Even though this procedure can be diagnosed by a veterinary technician, the shelter veterinarian should be present to confirm the diagnose.



Who gets Notified?



The case should be reported to the shelter vet or medical lead. It should be notified 24 hours but ideally the same day. This allows for quick treatment and housing decisions.



The Shelter manager should be informed about demodicosis cases so they can arrange transfers to rescue groups or a foster home for recovery.



Demodicosis dogs should not stay in the shelter since the recovery period can be 2- 3 months.

Where Are Affected Dogs Housed?

When animal Shelters encounter dogs with demodicosis their response to managing this is based on the severity of the condition, the available resources, and the established protocols.

According to the Today's Veterinary Practice article on management of canine demodicosis strict isolation is not required. Since this condition is caused by Demodex mites and is not contagious to other animals or humans the probability of secondary contagious yeast or bacteria infections can happen. In those cases, ASPCA isolation recommendations should be seen to minimize disease transmission.

Due to the extended recovery period, many shelters opt to transfer affected dogs to rescue groups and foster homes where they can receive consistent care. Gatorland Animal Services advises against keeping dogs with demodicosis in the shelter until resolution.



Cleaning the Environment

While Demodex mites are not contagious and cannot be spread by contact, many dogs with demodicosis have open sores or skin infections, which can spread bacteria or yeast to other animals via surfaces or hands.

Shelters should follow strict cleaning protocols: remove all items, scrub away debris, and disinfect the kennel daily with an EPA-approved disinfectant like Rescue. Dog bedding should be laundered in hot water and food bowls disinfected after each use. Wearing gloves and using separate cleaning supplies helps prevent cross-contamination and helps overall shelter hygiene.



Treat or Euthanize?



Don't Treat/Euthanize

Open admission shelters with limited resources or space may decide to euthanize moderate to severe cases. This is common when the dog is immunocompromised, and not likely to respond to treatment. If this is the case a veterinarian should address the situation and in case of euthanasia, they should be the ones responsible for performing it.



Treat in Shelter

Treating Demodicosis in shelters is not a problem if the shelter has the available staff for daily medication administration, monitoring for secondary infections, and overall regular checks.



Foster Care/ Veterinary Clinic

Outside veterinary clinics are sometimes used when shelters lack on-site veterinary care, or the dog already has an adopter or foster waiting. Foster programs are preferred for moderate/ severe demodicosis cases due to the long recovery time. Foster homes also reduce stress, allow better monitoring, and free up space.



Treatment Initiations

Treatment

Canine demodicosis is treated with one of the Isoxazoline products and the typical time for elimination of mites and resolution of the disease is from 2-3 months. The veterinarian in the shelter should be the person in charge of stating which treatment route should be taken.

Some Isoxazoline products:

- Bravecto
- Nexguard
- Simparica

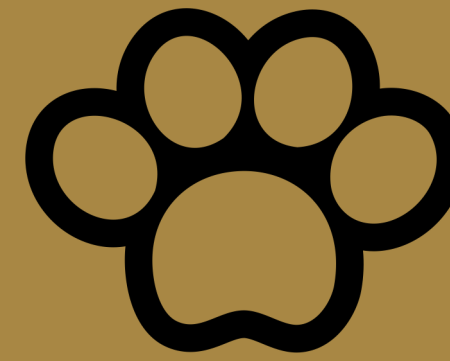
Dogs > 6 months old
Administer Bravecto
chewable tablet to dogs
with positive skin
scrapes.

Dogs < 6 months old
Administer Nexguard
chewable tablets for
their recommended body
weight.

Start the dog on Oral
Cephalexin at a dose of
15 mg/lb given twice daily
with food for 30 days.

Consult the veterinarian
about prescribing
additional medication!

Adopting Dogs with Demodicosis in Shelters!



Can animals be adopted before full recovery?



Can the animals be made available for viewing and holds before recovery?



Is a medical disclosure required at adoption?



DOCUMENTATION



In a shelter setting, documentation is essential for tracking a dog's progress and ensuring continuity of care, especially with a condition like canine demodicosis.

Diagnosis

Test Results

Treatment

Rechecks

Adoption

Home Care
and
Prescriptions



Positive Outcomes

Transparency and Ethical Considerations:
Open Communication with adopters is **CRUCIAL!**

Relevance of Asilomar Accords:
These provide a framework for categorizing animals in shelters based on their health and behaviors.



Are Shelters Treating Demodicosis cases?

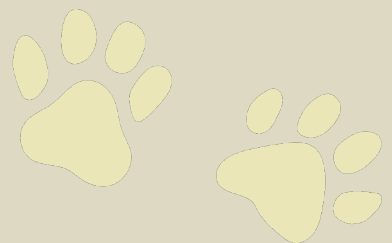
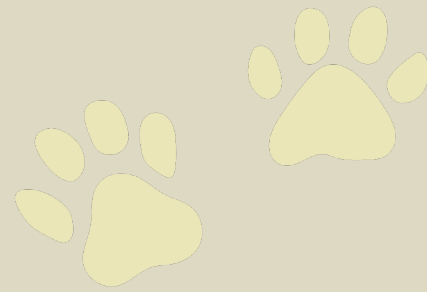
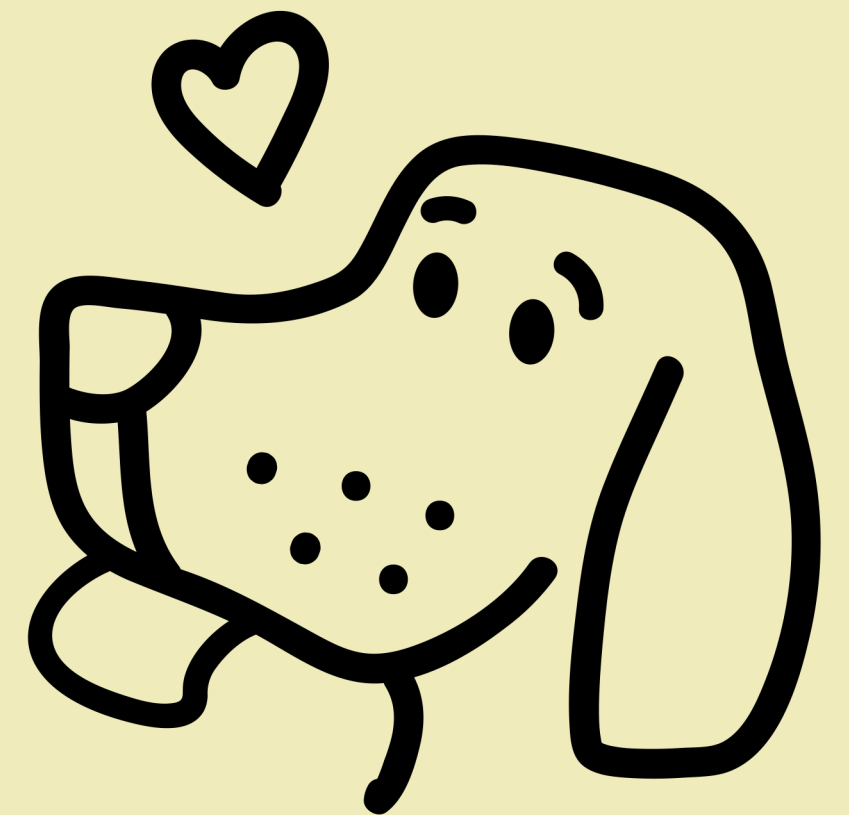
Shelter Dog with a serious case of demodectic mange receive treatment

“Crusty” Puppy at Risk of Euthanasia Due to Severe Mange Recovers and Reveals “Goofy” Side

The answer to this question is YES! Many shelters treat demodicosis cases, especially when they partner with rescues or have access to foster networks. For example, People.com shared the story of a puppy named Steven, who was at risk of euthanasia due to severe demodicosis but was rescued and made a full recovery thanks to Austin Pets Alive and a dedicated foster employee. Similarly, Best Friends Pet Adoption Center in Atlanta highlighted Rosie a dog diagnosed with demodicosis and brought into their shelter to be treated and then adopted to a loving home. These stories show that with proper support, shelters, and rescues can successfully treat and rehome dogs with demodicosis.



Thank You for
Listening!



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