

## Harvest Mites

The harvest mite, as its name suggests, is common in late summer and often found on the head and legs of dogs and cats after walking through long grass. It is distinctly recognisable as clusters of bright orange mites.



*Harvest Mites*

## Demodex

These unusual mites are found within the hair follicles and sebaceous (skin) glands. They are not contagious and tend to cause disease when the immune system of the animal is suppressed.



*Demodex*

## Treatment

The diagnosis of mite infestations can sometimes be difficult and treatment protocols will vary according to the type of mite. It is very important that if your pet shows any increase in scratching or itchiness is brought to the attention of your vet, especially if there are also signs of skin or hair damage.

## Summary

- Ticks and mites are common parasites of dogs and cats.
- Routine prevention should form part of normal preventative healthcare and the most suitable product may vary according to your pet's lifestyle – please discuss with your vet.
- Ticks may spread other diseases to your pet.
- There is a risk to human health from both ticks and mites.



## Excellence in Veterinary Care

XLVets Small Animal member veterinary practices work together to share experience, knowledge and ideas to ensure the highest levels of quality and care for their client's pets. XLVet member practices provide a compassionate and caring service for all pets and at the same time offer comprehensive and up-to-date treatment in all fields of veterinary medicine and surgery.

# TICKS AND MITES

And your pet



## What are ticks?

Together with fleas, ticks and mites are some of the most common parasites affecting our pets in the UK.

This leaflet considers the threats posed to our pets by ticks and mites and how you might suspect that your pet is affected.

Some of these external parasites also carry human health implications, which will be highlighted where relevant.

## Ticks



Ticks are particularly prevalent in woods and moorland. Different types of tick have evolved to feed from different animals, for example sheep, other livestock and wild animals such as deer and hedgehogs. The likelihood of your pet being exposed to ticks will depend on the type of environment it visits and also the other animals that live there. Ticks are unlikely to pass from pet to pet.

Ticks feed by latching onto the animal, piercing the skin and sucking blood. Ticks can live and feed from several different animals in their lifetime, so can sometimes spread diseases from one animal to another.

### How to spot ticks on your pets:

- You may often notice a single engorged tick as a grey nodule attached to your pet.
- There may be many ticks attached at one time, especially around the face, ears and front legs.
- As the tick feeds, it increases in size (the female Ixodes ricinus can reach up to 10mm when fully engorged).

## Ticks and the travelling pet

In many EU countries, travelling dogs are at risk from tick-transmitted diseases such as borreliosis, babesiosis and ehrlichiosis, all of which are serious. It is essential to discuss control with your vet before travelling abroad.

Borreliosis, or 'Lyme Disease', is also a risk to dogs here in the UK and can affect humans.

### Treatment

Tick control should be considered for all pets, but especially those travelling abroad or visiting high risk areas of the UK (such as woods and moorland). Some spot-on solutions and collars that are used for flea control will also kill and repel ticks. Please discuss with your vet which product would be most suitable for your pet's lifestyle.



If a tick is found on your dog, it should be removed as soon as possible using a specially designed 'tick-hook'. It is important to remove the mouth parts intact, as they can cause an infection if left inside your pet.

## Mites and when to suspect them

Mites are very small parasites that will often only be seen with magnification or a microscope. They live within or on the skin and often cause intense irritation, such that the signs an affected pet will show are usually the result of self-damage through scratching and biting. **Five types of mites are common in pets:**

### Sarcoptes

This is the mange mite ('fox mange', 'scabies'), which is relatively common in dogs, but rare in cats. It causes severe irritation, is highly contagious and may also pass to humans!



Sarcoptes

### Ear Mites

The ear mite, otodectes, lives on the skin that lines the long ear canal of dogs and cats. It is very common in puppies and kittens and causes very itchy ears that will produce a lot of thick brown waxy discharge.

### Cheyletiella

Often referred to as 'walking dandruff' this mite, which can also affect humans, produces an itchy, scurfy skin mainly on the body of dogs.