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MANGE is a general term which describes a group of skin diseases caused by a mite which lives on or under the skin. There are several types of mange commonly encountered in dogs and cats.

DEMODECTIC MANGE (Demodicosis, Red Mange, Follicular Mange) is caused by a mite called *Demodex canis* and is present in very small numbers on most healthy dogs. In some dogs the mites multiply rapidly and invade the skin in large numbers resulting in hair loss and redness of the skin. Demodectic mange is believed to be stress induced. It can suddenly appear after injury, pregnancy, or illness.

Demodectic mange is seen mostly in young dogs (3 to 12 months of age) although it sometimes occurs in older dogs. Short haired dogs (such as Dobermans, Pit Bull Terriers, Dachshunds) are often affected, but cases do occur in long haired animals. Demodectic mange is not contagious from dog to dog or dog to man.

Localized demodectic mange usually begins as a small area of hair loss and skin redness on the face and front legs. The areas are usually not itchy. The hair loss may spread and develop into generalized demodectic mange, which is one of the most severe skin diseases of dogs. The infected areas become larger and join to form plaques (solid elevations of skin) on the head, neck, legs, and body. These become infected with bacteria and large pustules may form all over the body. When this occurs, redness, swelling, and itching are often present.

Treatment consists of injections and surface medications. Antibiotics are needed in generalized infections. Severe cases may take months to recover and some of them never get completely better.

SARCOPTIC MANGE (Scabies) is caused by a mite called *Sarcoptes scabiei*. This disease is very, very itchy and is highly contagious to other dogs. It can also be transmitted to human beings. Small swellings with bloody crusts may appear all over the body, with elbows and ear edges most commonly affected. Because dogs with scabies are intensely itchy, violent scratching can cause sores and skin infections.

Diagnosis depends on history, clinical signs, and microscopic examination of a skin scraping to identify the mite.

Treatment consists of injections and medications to relieve the itching and medicated dips to kill the mites. In severe cases, it is necessary to clip off all the hair. Once the generalized infection is under control, local areas can be treated at home. It may take one to two months for complete recovery. People who have become infected must see their family doctor or dermatologist for proper medical care and advice.

