



# AUSTRALASIAN BOSDOG<sup>®</sup> SOCIETY INC.

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THE AUSTRALIAN BULLDOG SOCIETY

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## Notes on Mites, Diet & General Skin Care

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Please DO NOT pay attention to the horror stories you may hear or be told about mites.

Nearly all dogs acquire mange mites from their mother in the first few days of life. These mites are considered normal skin fauna when present in small numbers. They produce disease only when an abnormal immune system allows their numbers to get out of control. This occurs primarily in puppies, and in adult dogs with lowered immunity.

Stress is a common cause when a dog or puppy suddenly breaks out with demodex within days of changing homes or when a female goes through a heat cycle at or before 1 year of age. It has been linked with an "immature immune system". Some dogs' immune systems may not be fully mature until approximately 3 years of age.

The presence of an active case of demodex in an immature dog or bitch is not an automatic marker to have the animal spayed or neutered. When the immune system rebounds the disease can spontaneously heal itself. Once the immune system is fully mature, the decision for sterilisation can then be made. However dogs presenting with generalised mange who take a long time to recover and it keeps recurring, should not be bred with.

### Localised Mange

This disease occurs in dogs under 1 year. The appearance of the skin is similar to that of ringworm. The principal sign is thinning of the hair around the eyelids, the lips and the corners of the mouth, and occasionally on the legs and feet. The thinning progresses to patches of moth-eaten hair loss about one inch in diameter. In some instances the skin becomes red, scaly and infected. If more than 5 patches are present, the disease could be progressing to the generalised form. This occurs in approximately 10% of the cases.

### Generalised Mange

This starts out as a localised case but instead of improving, it gets worse. Treatment can be prolonged and can require frequent changes in medication. Dogs with generalised disease develop patches of hair loss on the head, legs and trunk. Some cases are a continuation of localised mange - others develop spontaneously in older dogs.

When generalised demodectic mange develops in dogs under one year of age, there is a 30-50% chance that the puppy will recover spontaneously.



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## Treatment

Your vet can tell you very simply if it is a case of mites by a skin scraping, another one at 1 month and two months to tell you if you are in the clear.

Research has shown there are at least three types of mite infestations. Whatever type shows up in our dogs is very easily and fairly inexpensively treated (as long as it has not been neglected) – treatment of choice is Cydectin, second choice Ivomec (it is fairly foul tasting so treating with the injectable type – but given orally – means less volume is necessary). The dosage is dependable on weight and is given for about two months. Veterinary treatment is essential.

Natural remedies such as a topical preparation such as Canex can be used to shorten the course. Many cures attributed to drugs probably are spontaneous recoveries. Watch closely to ensure that the localised form is not progressing to the generalised type.

## Natural Remedies

Recipe for spray. This has been found to work in some cases. Take the peeling from 4 lemons and bring to a boil in one quart of hot water. Boil for approximately 20 minutes. Remove from stove and let cool. Leave the peels in this solution while it ages. Then strain into a spray bottle and spray the animal at least every other day. This is a homemade formula for D-Limonene. It is worthwhile trying but of course it is important to ensure that if you are not seeing any immediate effects to consult your vet.

We have not found fancy washes helpful although vets may suggest Malaseb shampoo during the initial stages. Nor have we found antibiotics very necessary – as long as you DON'T leave it before treatment.

Hot temperatures can also stress the dog, and flea and tick infestations can also cause the onset of mites as well as heat spots if left untreated. It is recommended that in the hot Summer months when this occurs, that tick and flea injections be used on a monthly basis to prevent mites or even Advocate which is used for worming amongst other things. Remember this is only used as a preventative and if your dog is actually diagnosed with mites then proper veterinary treatment is required immediately.

After approximately two months of treatment, the hair begins to grow back. In three months most cases are healed.



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## General

As a general rule please do NOT wash your dog a great deal!! Every time you do it you are taking out the essential oils for a good coat. Many shampoos are suspect with colouring, perfumes etc. Simple brushing will encourage a good coat. If they do get wet (and they love to sit in kid's paddling pools etc) take time to dry them thoroughly especially between the toes – wet, hot skin is a prime place for infections, skin problems etc. Leather collars left on next to wet skin can cause problems.

## Diet

I would suggest the best diet for an adult dog is a good quality complete dry food with no artificial colouring (can be mixed with a small amount of good quality canned food e.g. Advance), or a good raw diet such as the BAAF diet. Do not feed supplements unless advised by your vet. DO NOT AD LIB FEED YOUR DOG (i.e. just leave food out all the time). DO NOT GIVE HIGH ENERGY FEED and DO NOT OVER-FEED – all these things can result in damage to bone growth in young dogs.

If you wish to feed your dog bones make sure you only give them the BIG shin bones.

ABS Management Committee  
August 2013

*The ABS Inc. is a registering body for Australasian Bosdogs (formerly Australian Bulldogs). We put out advisory, educational notes and guidelines for breeders and owners. Please note that these notes are advisory only and you should check with your veterinarian to discuss treatment if you think your dog has mites.*