

CANINE DEMODICOSIS

WHAT IT IS

Canine demodicosis is a noncontagious parasitic disease caused by mites of the genus *Demodex* spp.

THE CAUSES

Demodex mites are transmitted to puppies from their mother during the first days of life. It is believed that almost all dogs, even those in excellent health, harbor small numbers of these mites in their skin. In some individuals these mites multiply very quickly, and this leads to the disease. However, it is not known exactly why these mites reproduce so quickly in some dogs rather than in others. Because the predisposition to develop demodicosis is hereditary, it is advisable that animals affected at a young age and in a generalized form should no longer be used as breeders. In animals that first contract demodicosis in adulthood, the presence of an underlying cause of immunodepression such as a tumor or hormonal imbalance, which may have favored its occurrence, should always be investigated.

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

Demodicosis can occur in a mild and localized form and in this case regresses spontaneously without the need for treatment. The more severe and generalized form require appropriate antiparasitic treatment. The face is the area of the body that is affected first (especially around the lips and around the eyes), followed by the front legs and the rest of the body. Characteristic lesions are multiple patches with partial or complete loss of hair with follicular plugs and scales.

DIAGNOSIS

Diagnosis of the disease is obtained by skin scraping and/or picking up some hairs on the affected areas and examining the material obtained under a microscope.