



Scabies/Mange



What is Scabies/Mange?

A parasitic mite (*Sarcoptes scabiei*) that burrows just beneath the surface of the skin causes sarcoptic mange. Sarcoptic mange is also known as scabies. The mites bury into the skin of canines and feed on material in and on the skin. Sarcoptic mange is a **zoonotic** disease, which means it is transmissible from animals to people.

Where is it found?

The most commonly affected species in the U.S. and in Wyoming are red foxes (*Vulpes vulpes*), gray wolves (*Canis lupus*), coyotes (*Canis latrans*), and American black bears (*Ursus americanus*).

How is it spread?

Mites are transferred to new hosts when the affected animal comes into direct physical contact with others. Larvae and nymphs may also fall off the host animal and can survive in the environment for several weeks. If an uninfected animal encounters a contaminated environment (e.g., moving into a shared nest or den), the mites can infect the new animal.

It's important to note that some animals are exposed to mange mites and do not show any signs of infection; why certain animals are more affected is a subject of current research. Factors include host species, mite variety, and general host health and immunity.

What are some clinical signs of disease?

Sarcoptic mange triggers an allergic response in the host which leads to progressive skin damage as the host scratches and rubs the affected area. Animals infected with mange usually suffer from alopecia, hyperkeratosis, seborrhea, scabs, ulcerations, and lesions. If the case is severe the disease can affect the animal's entire body leading to emaciation and poor body condition.

How does this disease affect me?

Humans can get scabies or other types of mange from direct contact with mites that cause the condition, from animals or from human-to-human contact who have the mite. Most cases of mange and scabies affect only your skin and are treatable. Symptoms include severe itching, skin rash, and discoloration of the skin in areas of the body with skin folds. Seek immediate medical treatment if you suspect you have the condition. Mange and scabies are highly contagious and may make you susceptible to a secondary infection.

Information for outdoor recreationists:

If you live or have contact with an animal with mange, make sure to treat yourself. The cycle of mange and scabies will not stop until you get the condition treated. The best way to prevent mange and scabies is to avoid contact with wild animals. Wear long sleeves and pants while recreating outdoors. If you suspect you've come in contact with an infected animal make sure to wash all clothing in hot water.

For additional information on Disease Name or any other wildlife disease, please contact the WGFD Wildlife Health Laboratory at 307-745-5865.