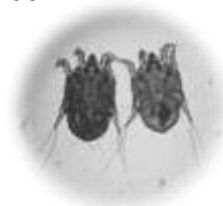


# Ear Mites

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Ear mites, also known as *Otodectes cynotis*, are a common external parasite found in both cats and dogs although cats are more susceptible than dogs. Feral cats that do not normally receive veterinary care have a very high incidence. The life cycle of the ear mite is between 18 and 28 days. Within that life cycle the egg hatches and goes through two life stages (the protonymph and deutonymph) each stage taking 5 days to complete. A very unique aspect of the deutonymph is that the larva has the possibility of maturing into either a male or female mite and it is this stage that engages in mating behavior. If the deutonymph develops into a female following mating, it will be pregnant. If the deutonymph develops into a male it is unaffected by the mating.



A cat can show signs irritation with only a few ear mites present or there can be hundreds to thousands present in each ear. A dog tends to have far fewer mites present if they are affected at all. Signs of an ear mite infestation include head shaking, scratching at the ears, red, swollen ears, or large amounts of black “coffee grounds” looking debris. In cases of very heavy infestations the mites can leave the ear canal and cause a skin infestation in areas around the ears. Symptoms of an ear mite infestation can mimic several other causes of otitis so it is important to have your pet examined by a veterinarian to determine the best treatment. Ear mites sometimes can be seen using an otoscope or by doing a microscopic examination of a swab from the ear canal. Ear mite eggs are large compared to the eggs of other parasites allowing for easy identification under a microscope. There are several different treatment options available and your pets veterinarian will determine which course of treatment is best for your pet. Typically the ears need to be thoroughly cleaned out to remove the adult ear mites and debris prior to treatment. Ear mites can be transferred from one animal to another through close contact. Therefore it is important to treat all pets in the household if one is determined to have ear mites.



While human exposure is extremely rare, good hygiene practices such as hand washing and the laundering of bedding is important.

For more information contact Cedar Grove Veterinary Services at (920) 668- 6212 or [info@cgvet.com](mailto:info@cgvet.com). You can also find out more at [www.capcvet.org](http://www.capcvet.org).