

## **Ear Mites In Pets and People**

**Ear mites are a common and contagious cause of ear infections in dogs and cats. The most commonly affected animals are young cats; however, dogs can also be affected.**

**The mites do not burrow into the skin, but rather feed on surface debris, cells and materials created by infection. They can also live on other parts of a pet's body including the side of the face, around the ears and tail.**

**The clinical disease is often accompanied by scratching at the ears and a inflammatory reaction inside the ear canal. The result is a "coffee grounds" collection of wax, blood, ear mite excretion and tissue debris.**

**The diagnosis of ear mites is based on history, clinical signs and finding the ear mites in a microscopic examination of the dark discharge found in the ears. There are several ways to treat the infection and your veterinarian may prescribe any one of several medications which are effective.**

**This disease has an important human health aspect as the mites can infest humans and cause otitis (ear infection) as well as wheals, papules and excoriations on the arms and body. This is relatively rare, however, it should be considered in any circumstance where pets and people have similar symptoms concurrently.**

**The most important facts to remember about ears mites are:**

- 1. They should be ruled out by your veterinarian before considering other causes for ear infections.**
- 2. They can cause a misdiagnosis of dust mite allergy on allergy skin tests.**

- 3. They can affect human health.**
- 4. They infect cats and kittens more frequently than dogs.**
- 5. A simple microscopic exam of the ear discharge is highly accurate in diagnosis.**
- 6. There are many effective treatments available to pet owners which can be recommended or prescribed by your veterinarian.**