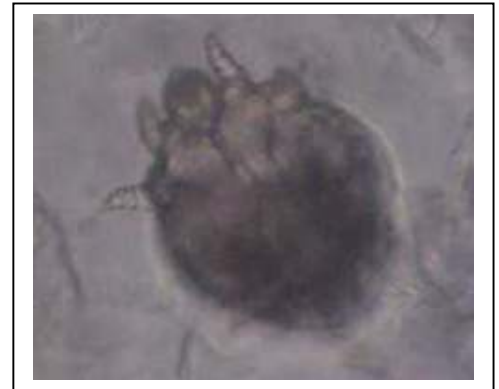


## Mange in Guinea Pigs

Two guinea pigs were presented with mange.

### Cause

- Mange is caused by an infestation of a mite called *Trixacarus caviae*. These microscopic mites burrow under the skin and cause severe pain.
- Death can occur due to severe dehydration from the increasingly larger sores and from failure to eat, because of their extreme pain and discomfort.
- In a healthy animal, the mite may be dormant for months or years, becoming a problem in a pregnant cavy or one subject to illness or stress.
- The most serious infestations occur in the young and ill older animals subject to stress and poor environmental conditions, usually on the trunk.



### How is the mite spread?

- Transmission occurs primarily through direct contact with infested animals although eggs can be carried to them inadvertently.
- Mites will seldom leave the host unless brushed onto the bedding or as a result of overpopulation or the death of the host.
- With no host, they will usually die within 3 weeks. However the eggs, which are laid in burrows in the skin, may survive independently for long periods of time. You may notice scratching, biting, hair loss, and in serious cases, seizures or fitting. Severe infestations can be life threatening.

### Symptoms

- These mites which only live on guinea pig and cause severe itchiness for the animal and can result in thinning and/or patchy loss of hair, scurfing of the skin (may resemble dandruff) and eventually, open sores as a result





of extreme scratching and biting which aggravates the hair loss.

- Scratching an area of skin infested by mites by hand may produce such pain and irritation in your cavy that it looks like it's having a fit. A

guinea pig suffering from mites may become less friendly and be reluctant to interact with its owner.

### Diagnosis

- Diagnosis is made by assessing the symptoms and back ground information (history) and is confirmed by identifying the mite from skin scrapings taken from an affected area of skin.
- It is important to rule out other causes of skin diseases in guinea pigs such as vitamin C deficiency and dietary imbalances.

### Treatment

- The treatment usually consists of applying a drug to the skin at the top of the neck which will kill the mange parasites. The treatment should be repeated at 2 weekly intervals for a total of 3 treatments.
- It is also important to treat any secondary skin infections.
- Resolving any husbandary problems such as diet and housing is vital as this may have been the trigger factor in the first place.

