



## **Cheyletiellosis (Walking Dandruff)**

*Cheyletiella blakei* infests cats, *C. yasguri* infests dogs, and *C. parasitovorax* infests rabbits, although cross-infestations are possible. This disease is very contagious, especially in animal communities.

Human infestation is frequent. Mite infestations are rare in flea endemic areas, probably due to the regular use of insecticides. These mites have 4 pairs of legs and prominent hook-like mouthparts. They live on the surface of the epidermis, and their entire life cycle (3 wk) is spent on the host. Clinical disease is characterized by scaling, a dorsal distribution, and pruritus, which varies from none to severe.

Cats can develop dorsal crusting or generalized miliary dermatitis. Asymptomatic carriers may exist. The mites and eggs may not be easy to find, especially in animals that are bathed often. Acetate tape preparations, superficial skin scrapings, and flea combing can be used to make the diagnosis. Weekly dippings with pyrethrins or lime-sulfur for 6-8 wks are necessary to eradicate the mites. Fipronil and ivermectin are effective, but nonapproved, treatments.

The environment should also be treated with a good acaricide, especially in animal communities (eg, breeding colonies, kennels), given the fact that adults may survive off the host for several days or even weeks.

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