



Treatment

This mite *cannot* be treated with external washes or mite solutions. There are only a couple of known treatments and they are as follows:

Ivomec (Ivomectin)

Ivomec can be purchased from your local vet. You should not require a consult if you approach the desk and let them know exactly what you are after and why. There are different strengths of *Ivomec* for different animals so you'll need to ask for 'sheep' *Ivomec* that will be taken 'orally' via a 1ml syringe. The vet will ask how much you need. You will need to administer 0.25ml per kilo via syringe once a week for 4 weeks. It is suggested to ask for more than you need in case you need to reuse the product again in the future. To purchase 10ml of *Ivomec* will usually cost around \$3.00. *Ivomec* has no known side effects and if overdosed will not affect the guinea pig. *Ivomec* has proven to be very effective and kills mites although does not kill the mite eggs hence why a 4 week treatment regime is needed. Treatment will need to continue for these 4 weeks before all mites and their eggs are eradicated.

Revolution (Selamectin)

Revolution has been used on dogs and cats with great success and is now being used with great

success in guinea pigs. Selamectin is the active ingredient in *Revolution* and works in a similar way to *Ivomectin*. *Revolution* works very quickly and will immediately kill all mites and their eggs before they hatch. *Revolution* is very simple to apply. It is recommended to purchase a pack for the smallest of dogs or cats as very little is required to be used on a guinea pig. Application is very easy you simply place 3-4 drops of *Revolution* somewhere on your guinea pig's skin, eg. behind the ears and/or on the rump under the hair. *Revolution* will dissolve into the skin very quickly and is a very fuss free way of regularly treating your guinea pig for any sort of mite. *Revolution* is the recommended treatment choice for internal mites, and the abovementioned dosage should be repeated every 3 months.

Disinfecting your guinea pig's home is essential in eradicating mites. You will need to disinfect/spray and wash all your guinea pig's surroundings thoroughly and then apply fresh bedding for your guinea pig. Keeping your guinea pig housed elsewhere for a couple of days while their cage is disinfected is recommended as most mites cannot live for long without a 'host'. Regular cleaning and disinfecting of your guinea pig's housing should help eradicate mite infestations in the future. Mixing a spray bottle with *Fido's Rinse Concentrate* or another mite treatment diluted with water and spraying the cage every couple of weeks, should also help keep mites away.

Fleas

Dogs and cats carry fleas and fleas are known to live on rabbits so they may be able to survive on a guinea pig. However, there are very few known cases of fleas being found on guinea pigs, it is very rare.



Parasites

Parasites are commonly found in guinea pigs and it is recommended to treat all your guinea pigs regularly. Parasites are easily transmitted from one guinea pig to another. Regularly disinfecting and cleaning your guinea pig's cage is a must when trying to eradicate any type of parasite. It is a good idea to house your guinea pig in another cage for several days while their home is being cleaned.

Weaker guinea pigs or guinea pigs kept in poor living conditions and on a poor diet can sometimes become more heavily infested and/or can be more prone to succumbing to the more severe cases of parasite infestation, especially in the case of mange mite infestation, although perfectly healthy guinea pigs can become infested just as easily. Guinea pigs will usually respond quickly to early parasite treatment.



External Parasites

These parasites live on the external surface of the guinea pig. There are three main types of external parasites that guinea pigs can get, and a description of

each is listed below. External mites do not cause severe itching or pain to your guinea pig, although they can possibly cause coat thinning, mild to moderate itching and/or affect the appearance of the coat by being able to see the presence of them. It is a good idea to treat your guinea pig at the first sign of any mites before they get heavily infested.

Running Lice

There are three different types of running lice but the GLIRICOLA PORELLI is the most commonly found. These lice are around a millimetre in length and are a yellowish colour. They are found on the skin and they move around by wriggling like little worms. They can be found anywhere on the guinea pig, but are mostly seen on the guinea pig's back or around the eyes and behind the ears. Running lice do not suck blood, they live from skin debris. The itching caused is only mild to moderate. The lice may cause thinning of the guinea pig's coat. The lice eggs are attached to the hairs and usually you see them behind the ears.

Static Mite

This mite is called CHIRODISCOIDES CAVIA. No-one seems to know exactly where they came from but they are commonly found in hay. These mites are very tiny and can barely be seen without looking very closely. They firmly attach themselves to the guinea pig's coat. They are a very common mite considering they are found in hay. They are found particularly around the shoulders and on the upper half of the guinea pig. The mites look dark on a light coloured guinea pig and light on a dark coloured guinea pig. They sit on the outer surface of the guinea pig's coat and never actually get into contact with the skin. They don't usually cause itching even if your guinea pig seems to be loaded full of mites. The mites do not affect the health of the guinea pig although can multiply very quickly without treatment and in larger numbers can be seen easily on the coat and can affect the appearance of the coat.

Walking Dandruff

Walking dandruff is better known as CHEYLEITIELLA PARASITOVORAX. This mite can live on other animal species as well, eg. dogs, rabbits, cats. The mite is very small and is barely visible. When you can see them they look like 'dandruff' walking about. To dissolve the skin, these mites excrete digesting enzymes onto the skin's surface, which digests a small part of it. After this happens the mite eats the dissolved skin. These mites can sometimes cause the guinea pig to scratch excessively causing skin irritation, scabs and wounds, although is not as severe as mange mite can get. The mite can't live on people, although some people have experienced skin irritation around their necks where the skin is thinner.

Treatment

External mites and lice are easily eradicated by bathing your guinea pig in a mite wash which you can purchase from your local vet, pet shop or produce store. A recommended product to use is *Fido's Rinse Concentrate* (not the shampoo) which has the active ingredient PYRETHRIN in it which is what kills the mites. This product has proven very effective. Other mite washes with 'pyrethrin' should also be effective. To be sure all your guinea pigs are free of mites it is best to bath them in the wash once a week for 3-4 weeks as even though the live mites will die the treatment will not kill the mites inside not yet hatched eggs. Static mite can be harder to rid your cavy of as even when they are dead their eggs stick to the coat. Eucalyptus oil rubbed on the coat with a soft towel has been said to work well in removing the eggs. Mite 'spray' commonly sold in pet shops has not been proven effective at eradicating mites and is not recommended to purchase.

Internal Parasites

Internal parasite infestation is becoming more commonly found in guinea pigs. Internal parasites live within the skin of the guinea pig and cannot be treated by external mite washes. The more severe cases of this parasite infestation can flare up in guinea pigs that are pregnant,

stressed or suffering malnutrition, although all guinea pigs can become infested. Prevention is the best option when it comes to internal parasites as they are a parasite that causes severe pain and irritation to the guinea pig.

Sellnick Mange Mite

Mange is caused by a mite called TRIXAXARUS CAVIA. This mite causes severe itching and scratching, as the mite itself lives within the skin of the animal. If the guinea pig is not treated in the early stages, or is left untreated, it will eventually emaciate and die. This mite causes a lot of distress and pain to the guinea pig and in the more severe cases the guinea pig will noticeably lose weight.

Pictured below is a guinea pig suffering from untreated severe mange mite infestation.



Signs of mange mite infestation

- Excessive scratching/itching
- Scratching, causing self-inflicted wounds
- Dry and flaky skin
- Loss of weight in the later stages (if left untreated, the guinea pig will emaciate and die)
- Hair loss (if left untreated, guinea pigs can become completely bald)
- In the later stages the guinea pig will squeal in pain if touched