

Mites Are Likely Cause of Dog's Scabs

With no definitive diagnosis possible, try Ivermectin for dog's scabs.

By Jon Geller, DVM

Q. Since we moved to Acapulco my 5-year-old Shih Tzu has developed small scabs on his skin. Any idea what this could be and how to treat it?

A. Mexico is a land of contrasts. Just as you can enjoy a cheap Corona on the beach, you can also get Montezuma's revenge. It is no different for dogs. Although your dog may enjoy the laid-back south-of-the-border lifestyle, there are always parasites to contend with.

Mexico has no monopoly on skin parasites, but control measures are not as widespread, and there is an increased risk for your dog (and you) to pick up an unwanted free-loading visitor. Your Shih Tzu most likely has a case of mites, microscopic parasites that look something like ticks that are burrowing under his skin and enjoying feasting on his fat cells.

It takes a skin scraping and a microscopic exam to detect mites. Unfortunately most Mexican veterinarians cannot afford one. It makes sense to treat for what is likely, so you should contact a local veterinarian and ask for an injection of Ivermectin, which is available in Mexico. A single injection of Ivermectin, a powerful anti-parasitic medication, should take care of the problem.

If the scabs do not clear up, they could be due to a variety of other causes, but I would bet a frozen Margarita on mites.