

## Cheyletiella

**Also Known As:** walking dandruff, Cheyletiellosis

**Transmission or Cause:** Cheyletiellosis is caused by infestation of large mites who live on the surface of the skin. The mites live their entire life cycle (21 days) on the host. They are highly contagious, especially among young animals. Adult female mites are able to live without a host for up to 10 days.

**Affected Animals:** Cheyletiellosis affects dogs and cats of any breed as well as rabbits and humans.

**Clinical signs:** Animals affected with cheyletiella mites can be extremely itchy or hardly itchy at all. They will often get dry and scaly along their backs which can become more severe and spread to body-wide scaling. As the infection progresses, the itching becomes more severe. Patchy hair loss can occur caused by excessive scratching. Some cats may show few signs other than self-induced hair loss from chewing and pulling out their fur. In humans, cheyletiella mites cause a red raised rash on the arms, trunk, and buttocks that eventually turns into a yellow-crusting area. Human infections usually resolve in 3 weeks if the host animal is treated.



**Diagnosis:** The definitive diagnosis of cheyletiellosis is made by identifying the mites or their eggs. Scales can be collected with clear tape impressions, flea combing, or superficial skin scrapings which is then examined under the microscope. Cheyletiella mites are sometimes impossible to find on cats. If cheyletiellosis is suspected in your pet, treatment may be recommended even if no mites can be found.

**Prognosis:** The prognosis for cheyletiellosis is good and usually resolves with treatment.

**Treatment:** Treatment of cheyletiellosis involves off label use of an anti-parasitic.

**Prevention:** Cheyletiellosis usually does not occur in animals who receive regular flea and tick preventative.