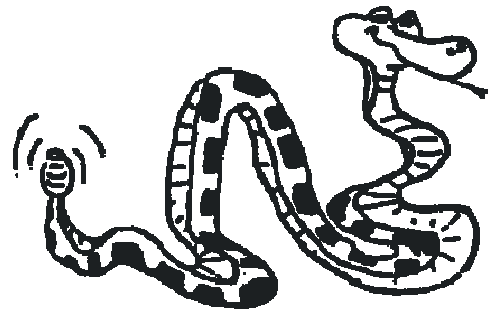




Shantock Hall Lane, Bovington, HP3 0NQ
Tel/Fax: 01442 833198
info@hopevets.com
www.hopevets.com

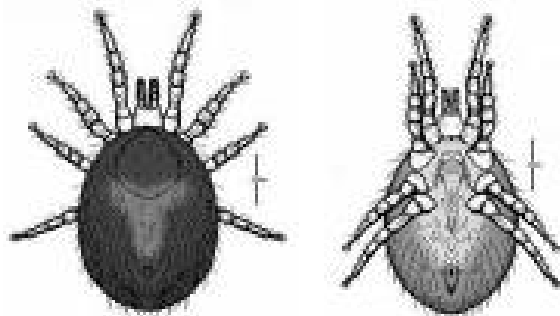


Snake mites

Snake mites are an important and unavoidable issue for any keeper. If noticed and dealt with early, they are no more than a nuisance but if left untreated snake mite related problems can spiral out of control. Snake mites breed prolifically and will spread quickly through your collection. A snake that is infested with mites will become debilitated and suffer shedding problems, but it doesn't end there. The other major issue is that the mites themselves can transmit bacterial, fungal and viral infections from snake to snake.

How do you know if your snake has mites?

Just look it over. Snake mites are tiny arthropods that feed on the blood of living snakes. When alive they look like tiny (pin point) size black, or sometimes red, dots moving around on the snake. They are usually concentrated around the eye, nostrils, and gular fold (the crease of skin on the snake's chin). You may also spot mites on your hands after handling an infected animal, or sometimes the mite faeces are apparent (especially on dark coloured snakes) as white flakes or specks. Infected snakes will often soak in their water bowl excessively in an effort to drown the mites. If you see excessive soaking, check your snake for mites and look at the water itself for dead mites.



If your snake has mites, don't fret. It most likely had nothing to do with your care of the snake. Think of mites like fleas with dogs. It happens, and there are flare ups from time to time, but with proper awareness and treatment, mites are easily controlled.

How do you get rid of snake mites?

All you will need is:

- A secure plastic tub that your snake fits in.
- You will need a product that actually kills snake mites. The two most effective products are “Xenex” containing ivermectin (this should not be used in Indigo snakes, terrapins, turtles, tortoises or skinks) and “Frontline” containing fipronil (care should be taken when using frontline in Boas – particularly those under 6 months of age). Both come in a spray form which you can administer yourself. For stubborn infestations we can give your snake an injection of ivermectin which is very effective.
- Avoid any home remedies that you may have heard of, as some of these can be harmful or even fatal to the snake.

If you’ve got all those then you are ready to start treating your snake:

- Soak the snake in warm water for 5 minutes to soak off some mites and eggs that are on the snake.
- Apply your prescribed treatment as directed below.
- These sprays can be an irritant to the mucous membranes around the eyes and mouth so care must be taken when treating these areas.
- Allow the snake to dry before returning it to the enclosure.
- Treat the snake weekly until there is no sign of any mites and then continue for an extra week after that.

Your prescribed treatment is

Dose.....

Apply directly to your snake spray on to a cloth and wipe over your snake

Now that you have treated your snake the fun doesn’t stop there, you also need to treat the snake’s enclosure to kill off any residing mites and their eggs:

- Remove your snake from its vivarium.
- Empty the vivarium of all its contents including substrate (i.e sand, bark etc.).
- Soak any furniture (bowls, rocks, hides etc) in boiling water for 30 minutes to kill off any mites and mite eggs.
- Wipe around the vivarium with a damp cloth to pick up any residual sand.
- Dilute 1 spray of xenex or frontline into 500ml of water (you can put this into a garden sprayer for ease of use and keep it for 2 weeks before discarding). Then spray the walls, floor and ceiling of your vivarium.
- Leave the vivarium to dry then line it with newspaper. Stick to newspaper and don’t use normal substrate until the mites have all gone.

Good luck

soon you will be snake mite free

