



Canine Pediculosis – Lice are parasites that live on the skin of an affected dog. They are small insects that feed by chewing on the skin of the dog or by sucking the blood, depending on the type of *louse*. Left unchecked, they can grow to be an infestation on the dog's body. Dog *lice* are not as common as dog fleas and are most often seen in situations where sanitary practices are poor.

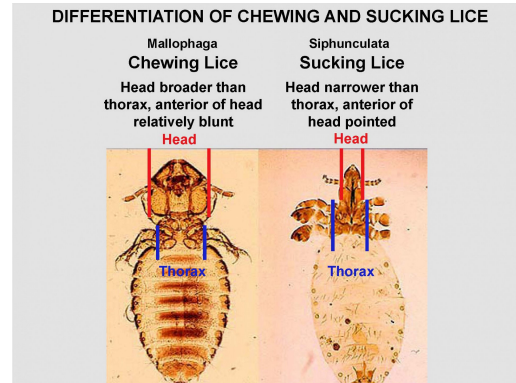
Symptoms and Types of Dog Lice

Symptoms seem in infested dogs include:

- Excessive itchiness and scratching
- Hair loss, most often around the ears, neck, shoulders, groin and rectal area
- Anemia, particularly in puppies and small dogs, can occur in cases with severe infestation.

There are two species of lice that infest dogs

- *Trichodectes canis*, known as the chewing louse. It chews on the skin of the infested dog.
- *Linognathus setosus*, known as the sucking louse. It sucks the blood of the infested dog.



Causes of Dog Lice

Both lice types can be passed by direct contact or through contact with contaminated objects such as grooming tools or bedding. Lice are species-specific. They do not move from one species to another. Which means you cannot get lice from your dog nor can your dog get human-specific lice from you. Diagnosis is easily made by visually observing lice or their nits (eggs) in the fur. Adult lice are flat, six-legged insects with no wings. Nits can be seen attached to the individual hair shafts and appear as small white dots.

Treatment for Dog Lice

There are a wide variety of dog shampoos, as well as insecticidal sprays or powders that are effective in killing lice. In addition, products such as fipronil and selamectin can also be used (they come in various brand names). It may be necessary to treat your dog more than once to kill the developing nits as they hatch.

Follow your veterinarian's directions closely, as these products can be harsh on some dogs, especially puppies.



In cases where your dog's fur is badly matted, it may be necessary to shave the fur to be sure you treat the lice and nits that may be embedded in the tangles. To prevent reinfection, dispose of or wash all of your dog's bedding, as well as thoroughly cleaning all of the places your dog spends time. Some items that cannot be laundered may be sealed tightly in plastic bags for a few weeks. Disinfect all grooming tools and everything else your dog comes into contact with regularly such as crates, furniture, carpeting, and hard flooring.