

Cuterebra (Botfly) in Pets

What Are Cuterebra?

Cuterebra, commonly known as botflies, are parasitic flies that infect small mammals, including dogs and cats. The larvae of these flies develop under the skin of their hosts, forming a characteristic swelling with a breathing hole. While unsettling, these infestations are typically treatable with proper veterinary care.

Life Cycle of Cuterebra

1. **Eggs** – Adult female botflies lay eggs near burrows or areas frequented by small mammals (such as rabbits and rodents).
2. **Larvae** – The eggs hatch into larvae, which enter the body through natural openings like the nose, mouth, or small wounds.
3. **Development** – The larvae migrate under the skin and form a swelling (called a warble), where they continue to grow.
4. **Exit & Pupation** – After about a month, the larvae exit the host through the breathing hole and fall to the ground to pupate. They eventually emerge as adult botflies, and the cycle repeats.

How Do Animals Get Cuterebra?

Pets most commonly get infected when they explore areas where botflies lay eggs, such as rabbit or rodent nests. The larvae enter the pet's body through open wounds or natural orifices and migrate under the skin before settling in a location to develop.

When and Where Do Cuterebra Occur?

Botflies are seasonal parasites, most commonly found in late summer and early fall. They are prevalent in rural and semi-rural areas where small mammals are abundant. Pets with outdoor access or those that hunt rodents are at higher risk of exposure.

Signs of Cuterebra Infestation

- A swollen lump on the skin with a small hole
- Movement or drainage from the hole
- Redness or irritation around the swelling
- Excessively licking or scratching at the site
- In some cases, lethargy or fever if the infection becomes severe

Treatment and Management

If you suspect your pet has a Cuterebra larva, **do not attempt to remove it yourself**, as improper removal can cause complications. Veterinary treatment includes:

- Carefully extracting the larva using specialized techniques to avoid rupture.
- Cleaning and flushing the wound to prevent infection.
- Administering antibiotics if necessary to prevent secondary infections.
- Pain management and monitoring for any complications.


Turn over for more information


Prevention Tips


- Keep pets indoors or supervise outdoor activities, especially in late summer and fall.
- Prevent access to rodent or rabbit nests where botflies lay their eggs.
- Perform regular checks on outdoor pets for any unusual lumps or sores.
- Seek veterinary care promptly if you notice any suspicious swellings.

If you have any concerns about your pet's health or suspect a Cuterebra infestation, contact **Franktown Animal Clinic**:

****Franktown Animal Clinic ****

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