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Stomatitis in Snakes

Stomatitis occurs most frequently in snakes, but turtles and lizards are affected as well. This disease is common in snakes due to the immune suppression of stress secondary to poor captive husbandry. Partial sheds (in snakes), feeding extruded pellets (dog food and other commercial products) in iguanas, internal and external parasites also act as stressors increasing the incidence of stomatitis. The clinical signs can include anorexia, increased amounts of mucous or purulent exudate (pus) from the mouth, inability to close the mouth completely (incomplete sheds), and swelling or reddening of the mouth.

Diagnosis

Diagnosis is based upon observance of the clinical signs. Diagnostics should include a complete blood count and culture of the mucous or pus.

Treatment

Treatment should be the same as for general respiratory diseases with the addition of localize flushing of the affected area. If abscesses are apparent, they should be lanced and flushed with dilute betadine solution. At Avian and Exotic Animal Hospital, we flush, cleanse, and pack the wound with silvadene creme BID for a minimum of seven days. Additionally, correcting the husbandry is the most important aspect of treating this disease.