

WILDSIDE VETERINARY HEALTH CENTER
Handout: Septicemic Cutaneous Ulcerative Disease (SCUD) in turtles



If you are a turtle owner, the term "shell rot" and/or "skin rot" may have crossed your path. However, it's time to acquaint yourself with its formal identity – Septicemic Cutaneous Ulcerative Disease (SCUD).

This handout aims to provide you with essential information about SCUD, including its causes, symptoms, and preventive measures.

What is SCUD?

Septicemic Cutaneous Ulcerative Disease (SCUD) is a bacterial infection that primarily affects turtles. It is caused by various strains of bacteria, and it can lead to severe skin lesions, ulcers, and systemic infections if not addressed promptly.

Symptoms of SCUD:

- Shell lesions: It is seen most commonly as multiple ulcers and wounds over the shell.
- Skin Lesions: Look for open sores, ulcerations, or lesions on your turtle's skin, especially around the limbs and head.
- Lethargy: A lethargic or inactive turtle may be displaying early signs of SCUD.
- Loss of Appetite: SCUD can cause a decrease in appetite or a refusal to eat.
- Discoloration: Abnormal skin coloration, such as redness or darkening, may be indicative of SCUD.

Causes of SCUD:

- Poor Water Quality: Inadequate water quality is a significant contributor to SCUD. Ensure your turtle's habitat is clean, well-filtered, and regularly maintained.
- Stress: Turtles experiencing stress are more susceptible to infections. Minimize stressors such as overcrowding, sudden environmental changes, or handling.
- Injuries: Wounds or injuries can provide entry points for bacteria. Take care to prevent injuries and promptly treat any wounds.

Preventive Measures:

- Maintain Clean Water: Regularly change and clean your turtle's water to ensure a healthy environment.
- Monitor Water Parameters: Keep an eye on water temperature, pH levels, and ammonia/nitrite concentrations to maintain optimal conditions.
- Provide a Balanced Diet: A well-balanced and nutritious diet boosts your turtle's immune system.

Find us at: www.wildsidevet.com

Dr. Veronica Pardini, DVM, CertAqVet

WILDSIDE VETERINARY HEALTH CENTER
Handout: Septicemic Cutaneous Ulcerative Disease (SCUD) in turtles



- Minimize Stress: Create a calm and secure habitat for your turtle. Avoid overhandling and sudden changes in the environment.
- Quarantine New Turtles: Before introducing a new turtle to your existing group, quarantine them to prevent the spread of potential infections.

Seek Veterinary Care:

If you notice any symptoms of SCUD or suspect your turtle may be unwell, seek prompt veterinary attention. Early diagnosis and treatment are crucial for a successful recovery.

Remember, a proactive approach to turtle care significantly contributes to their overall well-being. By staying informed and implementing preventive measures, you play a vital role in keeping your turtles happy and healthy.

Let us know if you have any questions!

Sincerely,

Wildside Veterinary team

Find us at: www.wildsidevet.com

Dr. Veronica Pardini, DVM, CertAqVet