

BREEDERS PANEL NEWSLETTER

Winter 2011



"Wow where did all this white stuff come from....brrrrrrr"

It is winter time again. The prediction is that we are going to have some very cold spells and for those of us with Dams having litters at this time of year, we must take extra care that the pups are kept warm. Remember that the temperature in the whelping box must be about 29°C the first week after the pups are born, 27°C the following two weeks and about 25°C thereafter. This can be achieved by putting a heating light above the box, preferably on a chain so it can be moved higher and lower according to the heat required. Having power outages can be a real problem especially when it happens at night. We solved that problem by getting an inverter. We found that ours [quite a cheap one] would keep the heating light going for about six hours.

In this newsletter you will find a very interesting article about **Diarrhoea in Pups** and the **Dangers to dogs of Eating Grapes or Raisins**. Also, diarize **27 August 11** as we plan to host two very interesting seminars!

Seminar: 27 August 2011

The Breeders Panel will host two very interesting seminars on 27 August 2011!

- 11h00 Sr. Alison Frantin from Doggypaddle will speak about **Hydrotherapy for dogs**.
- 13h00 Dr. Nathalie Rouget will speak about **Alternative Medicines**.

Please diarize this date! Invitations will be sent out soon.

PUPPY DIARRHOEA EXPLAINED

Author: Dr Gareth Zeiler (BVSc)



(Dr Gareth Zeiler has very kindly granted the FBCSA Breeders Panel permission to make use of part of his article from his website www.petpatch.net. Feel free to visit this site to find out more. First published: 03/09/2010; Last edited: 04/09/2010)

(Synonyms: Puppy diarrhoea, diet diarrhoea, stress diarrhoea, worm diarrhoea, viral diarrhoea, puppy soft stools, puppy watery stools, puppy bloody stools)

This article will explain a very common complaint most young puppy owners experience, that being puppy diarrhoea. There are many causes resulting in puppy diarrhoea. Two of them will be explained here. However, if new puppy owners stick to a few helpful hints provided towards the end of the article they should not experience diarrhoea at all.

Before you find out what can cause diarrhoea you will need to be introduced to the types of diarrhoea you could potentially see.

Diarrhoea Explained

The intestines are made up of the small intestinal tract and large intestinal tract. The small intestines have the following sections: The duodenum (this is where food leaves the stomach and enters the small intestines), the jejunum and lastly the ileum. The ileum enters the large intestines, namely: the colon and lastly the rectum.

Small intestinal diarrhoea and large intestinal diarrhoea tend to show different clinical signs. For instance if the puppy is experiencing small intestinal diarrhoea the faeces will often be expelled in normal to large amounts. If the puppy is experiencing large intestinal diarrhoea the faeces will be in small amounts passed frequently. Understand that amounts are being discussed and not the consistency. Diarrhoea traditionally has a soft to watery consistency compared to normal well formed firm faeces.

Diarrhoea can be seen as a clinical sign on its own or with abdominal pain and vomiting. The puppy could have normal activity or become very depressed. This will all depend on the causing agent, the puppy's health and the severity of the diarrhoea.

Diarrhoea is caused by an increase in water in the normal intestinal fluid (food particles, water and normal intestinal flora i.e. bacteria). The colon is responsible for absorbing most of the water in the intestinal fluid. The process of absorbing the fluid and forming firm faeces takes time. When the colon is injured or diseased the transient time for the faecal matter to pass from the ileum to the rectum is dramatically decreased. This means that there will not be enough time for the water to be absorbed. If the small intestine is damaged or diseased it will not be able to absorb nutrients and sugars in the intestinal fluid. The nutrients and sugars pull water into the small intestine and this will overload the colon with too much water for it to absorb causing diarrhoea. More of this will be explained when we discuss the causes of diarrhoea. When any part of the intestinal tract is damaged and inflamed often the damaged and inflamed tissue also increase their secretions thus adding to the formation of soft stools.

The soft form faeces tend to be mild diarrhoea. When there is blood in the soft faeces it indicates straining, usually this is the beginning of trouble and the puppy should be seen by a veterinarian. If the diarrhoea has large volumes of blood and is very watery this could be caused by a viral infection, if you ever see this in your puppy you will need immediate veterinary aid.

Coccidiosis

Coccidiosis is perhaps the most important protozoal cause of diarrhoea in puppies. Puppies from 2 weeks old to 6 months tend to be most severely affected. This is not an exclusive puppy disease, adults can also fall ill. There are many types of coccidian that can infect dogs with the different types causing different severities of illness.



Protozoa are single celled living organisms. They tend to infect the cell causing the trouble inside the cell of the intestinal lining which we call the mucosa. The patient presents with a watery diarrhoea most of the time. Mild infections or infections from less severe types of coccidia tend to cause persistent soft stools that do not resolve. At times this disease can be life threatening, the younger the puppy the more dangerous this pathogen tends to be.

Breeders, pet shop puppies and kennelled puppies tend to be more often infected due to their increased environmental load of the protozoa and the stress associated with these environments. Puppies with mild softening of the stools tend to self resolve their infection when provided with a good diet and stress free environment, however most puppies require some sort of medical management.

The diarrhoea may have small amounts of blood due to abdominal straining and starvation with intestinal mucosa breakdown. As this protozoon tends to be stable in the environment and dogs can become chronically infected with this pathogen treatment should always be given to rid the body of this pathogen.

The watery diarrhoea is due to the decreased absorption of nutrients in the small intestines. These nutrients pull water into the small intestines, this volume of fluid is often too much for the colon to absorb, hence the watery diarrhoea.

If treatment is not given the puppy will be prone to episodic bouts of watery diarrhoea every time they become stressed. Visit your vet if you believe that your puppy has coccidiosis, they will take a stool sample and examine it under a microscope to confirm the diagnosis.



Diet

When puppies are born and up until they reach around 4 weeks of age they are fed a diet exclusively on milk. In most cases this will be milk from the mother, in other cases it may be milk replacement. If puppies are fed on milk replacement diets you need to keep the formula you are using consistent feed after feed. If you change the consistency of the milk by either adding too much powder or too much water, you change the concentration of the nutrients. When the nutrient levels change, this will

stimulate variable growth of bacteria inside the small and large intestines. This variable growth of the intestinal flora can decrease the absorption of the nutrients inside the milk, or promote the growth of gas producing bacteria. Both of these situations can cause soft stool formation and potentially diarrhoea.

When the puppy is weaned (eating just solid food) the intestinal flora will also change. The diet is higher in fibre and other types of carbohydrates. This stimulates the intestinal flora to grow and diversify. This diversification makes it possible for the bacteria to break the food particles down into absorbable nutrients. The bacterial flora will grow into a steady population which will not harm the puppy. This process of intestinal colonisation of healthy bacteria can take up to 4 weeks. The puppy will often have bouts of loose stools during this time. On occasion, a self limiting painless diarrhoea episode will happen, not lasting longer than a day. Generally speaking this diarrhoea requires no treatment.

It is important to keep the puppy's diet consistent, if you are a breeder and feed your puppies Brand X of food you should encourage the puppy purchaser to also buy a bag of Brand X to minimise the stress of moving to a new home. This will also keep the intestinal flora happy and decrease the chance of diarrhoea.

When you wish to change food from Brand X to Brand Y you will need to phase the new diet in over 4 to 7 days at least. This allows the intestinal flora to slowly change to accept the new diet. If you change the diet rapidly this will cause diarrhoea and gas build-up. The gas build-up is very painful and might cause your puppy to stop eating due to gas distension.

The best way to phase in Brand Y is to add a quarter of the daily feeding volume to three quarters of Brand X for 2 days. Then you can mix half Brand Y and half Brand X for 2 days, followed by three quarters Brand Y and one quarter Brand X for the last 2 days. After this you can feed 100% of Brand Y. This is not only applicable to puppies; you should do this for all pets.

Diet change is by far the most common cause of diarrhoea in puppies. If you stick to the phasing in plan during a diet change you should virtually never see signs of this diarrhoea.

Other important factors are Stress, Worms, Vaccination reaction, Garbage disease, Foreign Bodies, Lesser protozoa, Viruses.

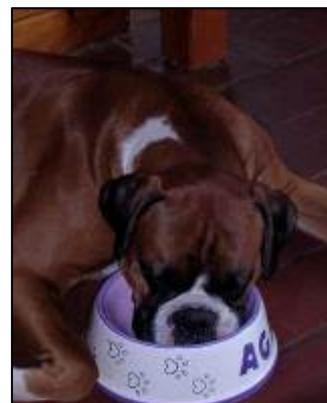
Conclusions

There are many causes of diarrhoea in puppies. When a vet is presented with a diarrhoea puppy there are lots of causes to rule out. Very often all the causes show the same clinical signs in the beginning phases of disease. This makes the veterinarian's job even harder to arrive at an actual diagnosis. There are tests that vets can run to narrow the diagnosis down to the absolute most likely cause.

The younger and smaller the puppy the more severe the diarrhoea may be. Puppies younger than 6 weeks with diarrhoea should be checked for the protozoan and worm causes. Puppies older than 6 weeks should be checked for viral causes. Puppies older than 3 months should be checked for all causes. The above is just a guide and is not written in stone, but this guide spells out two of the most common causes within the age groups.

The causes described above are only two of the most common causes of puppy diarrhoea and not all the causes of diarrhoea. When a puppy falls ill, its body releases many stress hormones, these hormones are often precursors to diarrhoea, especially if the puppy has a fever. This means that almost anything that can cause illness in a puppy will cause diarrhoea.

If your puppy misses one meal you are advised to take it to a trained veterinarian to determine if there is a disease process starting. Never starve your puppy for longer than a day as it is often difficult to get them eating again.



Remember to de-worm and vaccinate your puppy correctly, this will dramatically decrease your puppy's chance of experiencing diarrhoea.

Visit the website www.petpatch.net for more information



Dangers of dogs eating grapes



A lot of boxers love fruit but not all fruit is safe! Several cases of acute kidney failure have been reported in Holland due to dogs eating grapes or raisins. Even a small amount can make them ill.

There is apparently a substance in grapes and raisins that is poisonous to dogs. Scientists have not yet been able to discover what this substance is or what exactly takes place in the body to make the animal ill. Tests have been done to discover if pesticides or moulds could be the problem but these tests proved negative. Also, the possibility of high doses of vitamin D or heavy metals [like zinc or lead] have been examined but up to now there is no explanation for the symptoms of poisoning.

The first symptoms you will see are repeated vomiting, hyperactivity and the dog being severely agitated. Sometimes there is diarrhoea. In the stools one can see parts of partly digested raisins. After twenty four hours the dog becomes lethargic and very sleepy. His breathing will become irregular and he will refuse to eat or drink. Without medical intervention, less and less urine will be produced due to rapid kidney failure. This is a live threatening situation as the body is not able to get rid of the poison in the urine. Immediate veterinary care is a must to save the dogs life. Please take great care that your dog cannot get hold of grapes or raisins, this includes fruit cakes and fruit loaves.



Warm winter greetings,
Breeders Panel

June 2011

Who serve on the 2011/2012 committee?

Chairperson: Dr Marinda Oosthuizen

Secretary: Mrs Els Sporen

Committee members: Ms Adri Erasmus (FBCSA Representative),

Mrs Helen Rennie, Mrs Pam Zeiler, Ms Magda Koekemoer, Mrs Angela Roeland



The FBCSA has a new website address: www.fbcса.net