

How can gastroenteritis be prevented?

Prevent scavenging behaviour

- Make sure all rubbish, particularly food waste is disposed of properly and kept in closed containers.
- Keep an eye on your dog when out on walks, sometimes restriction to a lead or use of a muzzle to stop them eating things may help.

Good preventative healthcare

- Regular worming
- Regular vaccinations

Diet

- Keep your pet on a good quality diet without the addition of 'extras' such as fatty human foods and milk.
- **Avoid raw food diets** – these increase the risk of Campylobacter and Salmonella infections both for animals and humans
- If you have difficulty finding a diet that suits your pet, speak to a member of staff at the surgery. They will be able to advise you on diets specifically designed for animals prone to gastroenteritis.



Summary

Gastroenteritis is a common problem many cases are mild and can be managed easily

Most cases are caused by eating something inappropriate, however regular vaccination and worming will prevent some severe infectious cases

If signs of vomiting and diarrhoea last for more than 24 hours or are severe consult your vet



XLVets Small Animal member veterinary practices work together to share experience, knowledge and ideas to ensure the highest levels of quality and care for their client's pets. XLVet member practices provide a compassionate and caring service for all pets and at the same time offer comprehensive and up-to-date treatment in all fields of veterinary medicine and surgery.

GASTROENTERITIS



Gastroenteritis, or sickness and diarrhoea, is a very common problem in cats and dogs.

It is usually mild but in severe cases can become life threatening. This leaflet will help you understand how to manage the problem and when to contact the vet for help.

What is gastroenteritis?

Gastroenteritis is an inflammation of the stomach and intestines. Many cases will be mild and the pet will not appear unwell. The signs are usually obvious and may include:

- Vomiting
- Diarrhoea
- Gurgling noises from the stomach
- Flatulence

Some animals however, may be more severely affected, the vet should be consulted straight away if any of the following signs are seen:

- Frequent vomiting
- Abdominal pain
- Blood in vomit or diarrhoea
- Lethargy or depression



What causes gastroenteritis?

Sometimes it may not be possible to identify why the gastroenteritis has occurred.

Possible causes include:

- Scavenging behaviour
- Parasitic infections
- Protozoal infections
- Bacteria (Campylobacter, Salmonella)
- Viruses (Parvo virus)
- Adverse reactions to medication

Some of these infections can also affect people so good hygiene is very important.

How is gastroenteritis diagnosed?

Vomiting and diarrhoea is usually obvious but finding the cause of the problem can sometimes be tricky.

For cases which do not respond to symptomatic treatment your vet may ask to do further tests.

These can include:

- Sending a sample of diarrhoea for analysis looking for parasites and infectious agents such as campylobacter or salmonella
- Blood tests to look for signs of infection or inflammation
- Endoscopy or biopsy to look at structures in the gut more closely



Treatment of gastroenteritis

Many mild cases respond to symptomatic treatment:

- Feed small, frequent meals
- Use a palatable highly digestible food such as white fish or chicken with rice.

Your vet may also suggest using additional products containing:

- Binding agents such as kaolin
- Probiotics or "good bacteria"
- Prebiotics that help the good bacteria



Severe cases may need more aggressive treatment such as:

- Hospitalisation for intravenous fluids
- Antibiotics
- Pain relief
- Further investigations