



Canine Cough

We have recently seen a lot of coughing dogs diagnosed with Kennel cough. This syndrome has been renamed to Canine Cough to get away from the common belief that dogs only get infected while in boarding kennels. In fact dogs can get infected wherever they get into contact with other dogs. Usually this means nose to nose contact, but it is also possible for your dog to contract canine cough by sharing a water bowl with an infected dog.

Dogs do not have to show symptoms to be contagious and the incubation period is between 6-10 days. There are several pathogens causing the cough, often described as a harsh, productive cough. (It often sounds similar to a honking seal.) The 2 most common pathogens are the Canine Parainfluenza Virus and the bacteria *Bordetella bronchiseptica*. Both of which can be vaccinated against in order to protect your dog. However, no vaccines are 100% effective, but should your dog get infected despite having been vaccinated, then the cough is usually less severe and your dog will recover quicker.

Most dogs will be able to fight the infection without the need for treatment as antibiotic's do not kill the Parainfluenza virus. However, antibiotic's are often given because it is difficult to distinguish between a viral or a bacterial infection. A dog with only a mild cough, will probably only need an anti-inflammatory or nothing at all.

Until your dog recovers from Canine cough, he or she will benefit from being fed soft food as dry food can be a bit harsh on an already sore throat. It is also wise not to go for a long strenuous walk and to avoid heavy exercise.

Canine cough vaccine needs to be given yearly to be effective and dogs that don't go to boarding kennels are often just given vaccination against Parvo, Hepatitis and Distemper. These dogs will still be susceptible to contract Canine cough unless they get the extra vaccination. If in doubt, please feel free to phone and check with your vet.



Caught anything unusual, been fishing lately?

We have had a few unfortunate dogs brought to our clinic lately. They have been out on a fishing trip and poked their nose where they shouldn't.

Fortunately, all these dogs could have their fish hooks removed under sedation as it was attached to the lip or nose. But occasionally the fish hook gets swallowed and then attaches somewhere in the intestinal tract.



So when you are out fishing, do take care, especially if you are not using the baited hook straight away. The bait is just as tasty for your dog as it is for the intended catch.



Diabetes in Cats and Dogs.

Insulin is produced by the pancreas and is important in the regulation of blood glucose. Insulin allows glucose to be transferred from the blood stream to the tissue cells. The satiety center in the brain is what tells you that you have had enough to eat. This is dependent on sufficient insulin levels.



Insufficient Insulin causes increased glucose level in the blood stream and increased excretion through the kidneys causing glucose in the urine. This in turn causes increased urination because of a process known as osmotic diuresis. Glucose changes the fluid balance, hence more water is lost during urination. This in turn causes increased thirst as a reflex to replace the loss of fluid. As the satiety center in the brain gets starved of glucose when insulin level is reduced, the hunger sensation is not switched off and this in turn causes increased food intake. When these 3 symptoms are seen together, increased thirst, urination and hunger, then a diagnosis of diabetes may be likely.

Treatment of diabetes is aimed at reducing the clinical symptoms and stabilising the glucose level in the bloodstream. This is achieved by use of insulin injections once or twice daily.

Dogs will be on insulin for life once started on medication. This is because insulin dependent diabetes is caused by destruction of the insulin producing cells in the pancreas. Other causes of diabetes in dogs include autoimmune disorders attacking the pancreatic cells, or it can be caused by a toxic insult to the pancreas. Some dogs may have a genetic predisposition. Pregnant or entire bitches should be neutered as progesterone is an insulin antagonist.

Cats get diabetes by developing a resistance to insulin (non-insulin dependent) and if the resistance can be overcome, the need for insulin injections is reduced or can be stopped totally. It is often seen in older, neutered males and hence thought to be linked to increased weight and obesity. They become resistant to chronic excess of glucose in the blood stream so the insulin production gets turned off. Insulin injections are started to stabilise the blood glucose, but if started on an appropriate diet for weight reduction, then they often have enough insulin producing cells to get back into normal production as long as they don't gain weight again. These cats can often come off Insulin treatment.



While your dog or cat is on insulin treatment, they will require regular blood tests to check the blood glucose level. Your vet may also ask for a urine sample so that it can be tested for presence of glucose. Stress during handling or blood sampling can artificially elevate the blood glucose level, so your vet may opt for sending a sample off for Fructosamine. This will give a picture of the glucose level over the last 2-3 weeks and is not affected by stress.

Animals.....Did you know?

- > Pigs communicate constantly with one another; more than 20 vocalizations have been identified that pigs use in different situations, from wooing mates to saying, "I'm hungry!" 
- > Honeybees have hairs on their eyes to help them collect pollen
- > Fish communicate with each other by rasping their teeth to make sounds in their throat, or by using their swim bladder to create sounds
- > Mosquitos are attracted to the colour blue twice as much as any other colour 
- > Goldfish lose their colour if kept in dim light. Similar to humans, they need sunlight to keep their pigment 



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