

Seasonal Canine Illness (SCI)

As autumn rolls in, dog owners should be aware of a rare condition known as Seasonal Canine Illness (SCI). This illness tends to strike in September and primarily affects dogs that have recently taken a stroll through woodland areas.

What makes SCI particularly concerning is that it can affect dogs of any size, age, or gender. The cause of SCI remains a mystery, and while there's currently no cure, it's crucial to reach out to your vet if you notice any concerning symptoms in your pup.



What Are the Symptoms of SCI?

Typically, the signs of SCI appear within three days (72 hours) of a woodland visit. Keep an eye out for the following behaviours:

- **Vomiting**
- **Diarrhoea**
- **Tiredness**
- **Stomach pain**
- **Muscle tremors**
- **High temperature**

However, it's important to note that these symptoms can stem from a variety of other common conditions.

What Should I Do If I Suspect My Dog Has SCI?

Even though SCI is rare, if you notice any of these symptoms—especially within 72 hours of your dog being in a woodland area—don't hesitate to contact your vet right away.

Is There a Cure for SCI?

Unfortunately, due to the unknown cause of SCI, there isn't a specific cure. That said, some symptoms can be managed with anti-sickness medication and antibiotics. With prompt treatment, most dogs do recover from SCI.



How Serious Is SCI?

While the condition can be severe in some cases, leading to unfortunate outcomes for some dogs, early treatment generally results in a good recovery. Research from the Animal Health Trust indicates that since 2010, there has been a decline in the number of fatal cases.

How Can I Reduce the Risk of My Dog Getting SCI?

Monitoring your dog closely after a woodland walk can be crucial. Here are some steps you can take to help minimise the risk of SCI:

- **Keep Your Dog Hydrated:** Ensuring your dog drinks enough water is vital for their overall health.
- **Use Preventative Spray:** Consider applying a preventative spray against mites before heading out for a walk. There's evidence suggesting that

harvest mites are often found on dogs suffering from SCI, so applying a spray to their paws and underside could help keep them safe.

- **Act Quickly if Unwell:** If your dog starts to show signs of illness, contact your vet immediately and mention any recent woodland walks. Quick action could make all the difference.

Note: Currently, there are no licensed products specifically for treating harvest mites in dogs. However, some evidence points to Fipronil spray being effective when applied to the entire body. Always follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully.



By being vigilant and proactive, you can help keep your furry friend safe and healthy during the autumn months!