

Diarrhoea In Dogs

Diarrhoea in dogs can be caused by various factors, most of which are not serious and can be easily treated. Common causes include dietary indiscretion, such as eating something unusual or overeating. However, in rare instances, diarrhoea can indicate toxicity or a more serious health issue. It's crucial to consult your veterinarian if your dog experiences severe or persistent diarrhoea, especially if they are a puppy, elderly, or have underlying health conditions.



Why Does My Dog Have Diarrhoea?

Like humans, dogs can experience diarrhoea for a range of reasons. The most common causes include:

- **Dietary Changes:** Sudden changes in diet or consuming something they shouldn't have, such as table scraps or spoiled food.
- **Infections:** Bacterial, viral, or parasitic infections affecting the gastrointestinal tract.
- **Underlying Diseases:** Conditions affecting the bowel, liver, or pancreas.
- **Foreign Bodies:** Eating non-food items that can cause blockages.
- **Stress and Environmental Factors:** Stress, heatstroke, and dehydration can also trigger diarrhoea.

What Should I Do If My Dog Has Diarrhoea?

If your dog has diarrhoea, monitor their condition closely. Here's what to do:

- **Visit the Vet if Necessary:** Seek veterinary attention if your dog exhibits other symptoms, especially if they are a puppy, elderly, or have a health condition. Urgent veterinary care is essential if your dog shows signs like:

- Lethargy
- Repeated vomiting
- Increased thirst or urination
- Seizures
- Blood or unusual substances in their stool

Most mild diarrhoea episodes are not serious and usually resolve within a couple of days with proper care. If your dog seems otherwise healthy and has vomited no more than once, follow these tips for a potential speedy recovery:

1. **Dietary Adjustments:** Offer small portions of bland food, like boiled chicken or fish mixed with white rice. Gradually reintroduce their regular food after 24 hours of improvement.
2. **Encourage Hydration:** Ensure your dog stays hydrated. Offer cooled, boiled water in small amounts, especially if diarrhoea is accompanied by vomiting. You can also dilute low-sodium chicken stock to encourage drinking.
3. **Monitor Symptoms:** If diarrhoea persists for more than two days, or if your dog shows signs of lethargy or loss of appetite, contact your vet.

Important Note for Puppies: If your puppy has diarrhoea, take them to the vet immediately, as they can become dehydrated very quickly.



Preventing Diarrhoea in Dogs

While not all causes of diarrhoea can be avoided, you can take steps to minimise the risk:

- **Maintain a Balanced Diet:** Stick to your dog's regular diet, avoiding human food and leftovers, which can lead to serious issues like pancreatitis.
- **Limit Access to Toxic Substances:** Keep dangerous items like chocolate, xylitol (found in sugar-free gum), and poisonous plants out of reach.
- **Gradual Food Changes:** When changing your dog's diet, do so gradually over at least three days to allow their digestive system to adjust.
- **Prevent Scavenging:** Keep trash secure and consider using a muzzle in situations where scavenging might occur. Avoid giving bones, as they can cause gastrointestinal irritation or blockages.



How Will My Vet Treat My Dog's Diarrhoea?

Treatment will depend on the underlying cause of the diarrhoea. While antibiotics are often not necessary, your vet may recommend supportive treatments such as kaolin (a clay mineral) or other medications based on the specific issue. Additional tests may also be conducted to diagnose any underlying problems.