

Alabama Rot in dogs

Overview

- Alabama rot is a rare disease that affects dogs by causing damage to the blood vessels in their skin and kidneys.
- Skin sores are the most common symptom of Alabama rot, but in severe cases, it can cause kidney failure and even death.
- At present, the cause of Alabama rot is unknown.
- The outlook for dogs with Alabama rot is good if they only develop skin symptoms and receive treatment quickly, but is much poorer for dogs that develop kidney problems.
- Contact your vet if your dog has any wounds, or you're worried they may have Alabama rot.

What is Alabama rot?



Alabama rot (also known as Cutaneous and Renal Glomerular Vasculopathy/ CRGV) is an extremely rare disease in the UK. It affects dogs by causing damage to the blood vessels in their skin and in some cases their kidneys. In most cases, Alabama rot leads to skin sores and ulcers, but in severe cases, it can cause kidney failure and even death.

At the moment, the cause of Alabama rot is unknown, partly because it's so rare that it's very difficult to study. Nearly all cases occur during winter and spring (between November and May) and it's often reported in dogs that have been walked in muddy or woodland area. Alabama rot can affect dogs of any age, and any breed.

Symptoms

In most cases, skin sores/ulcers are the first sign of Alabama rot, but other symptoms can develop (over a few days) if the condition starts to affect the kidneys. Symptoms include:

- Skin ulcers/sores
 - Most commonly on the leg, foot, nose or tongue
 - Usually painful, red, raised and circular
 - Sometimes have a dark or black centre
 - Often surrounded by swelling and/ or bruising
- [Limping or stiffness](#)
- [Loss of appetite](#)
- [Low energy](#)
- [Vomiting/ Diarrhoea](#) (sometimes bloody)
- [Drinking/ peeing more](#)
- Red dots/ blood blisters on the skin

When to contact your vet

It's always best to contact your vet if you see any wounds on your dog, especially if they've been walking somewhere known for Alabama Rot or if they seem unwell. Alabama rot is very rare so it's unlikely to be the cause of your dog's symptoms, but it's always safe to have them checked if you're worried.

Am I eligible for PDSA veterinary treatment?

Diagnosis

Your vet may suspect Alabama rot from the symptoms your dog is showing but will often need to run tests to confirm the diagnosis. This

may include blood tests, urine tests or biopsies of your dog's skin or kidney.

Treatment

Treatment for Alabama rot depends on your dog's symptoms.

Skin wounds. Your dog is likely to need pain relief while their wounds heal. They may also need [antibiotics](#) if their wound becomes infected. If your dog is licking or nibbling their wounds, they may need to wear a [buster collar](#).

Kidney disease. If the disease starts to affect your dog's kidneys, they will need intensive care, involving a hospital stay and a fluid drip.

Outlook

If your dog has a mild case of Alabama rot (that doesn't affect their kidneys), they are likely to make a full recovery. However, if it spreads to the kidneys their outlook is poor, especially if they don't get treatment quickly.

Prevention

There's been lots of research into Alabama Rot but vets still aren't sure what causes it, which makes it very difficult to prevent. However, there are some sensible steps you can take if you are concerned for your dog, or you know of cases in your area:

- Check your dog regularly for wounds, and contact your vet for an appointment if you are concerned - it's easier to treat Alabama rot if the signs are spotted early.
- Wash your dog's feet after they come home from walking, especially if they have been in a very muddy area (it's been suggested that cases of Alabama rot are more common after a dog has walked in a wet, muddy places).
- Avoid walking in [areas known for Alabama rot](#).

Cost

Treatment for emergency conditions such as Alabama rot can become very expensive, especially if your dog needs hospitalisation and intensive care. It's important to speak openly to your vet about your finances, the cost of treatment, as well as what you think is right for your pet. There is often more than one treatment option, so if one doesn't work for you and your pet then the vet may be able to offer another.

Consider insuring your dog as soon as you get them, before any signs of illness start. This will make sure you have all the support you need to care for them.

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