

Haemorrhagic gastroenteritis (HGE) in dogs

Overview

- Haemorrhagic gastroenteritis (HGE) is a condition that causes vomiting and diarrhoea that contains blood.
- Specialists suspect it's caused by a nasty bacteria that attacks the lining of the guts.
- Symptoms of HGE usually last 2-4 days and most dogs make a good recovery if they receive veterinary treatment quickly.
- If your dog is showing any signs of HGE you should contact your vet immediately.

What is HGE?

No one is completely sure what causes HGE yet, but specialists think it is likely to be a nasty bacteria that attacks and damages the lining of the guts.

HGE is more common in small breed dogs especially Yorkshire Terriers, Miniature Schnauzers, Maltese.

Symptoms of HGE

Symptoms of HGE include:

- **Diarrhoea** often containing blood and gut lining (looks like strawberry jam)
- **Vomiting** – vomit may contain blood
- **A painful abdomen (tummy)** – signs include yelping when picked up, growling when you touch their tummy,

standing in a “prayer position” with their front legs on the floor and hind legs stood up

- **Pale gums**
- **Low energy (lethargy)**
- **Reduced appetite**



Blood and gut lining in diarrhoea

Dogs with HGE often become poorly very quickly. They can look perfectly normal one day and extremely unwell the next. Fortunately, most dogs with HGE will make a full recovery a few days after treatment from a vet. Symptoms of HGE are very similar to symptoms of parvovirus.

Treatment

If your vet thinks your dog has HGE it's likely they will admit them into the veterinary hospital for treatment. They may need to stay in for several days while they recover.

Treatment for HGE usually includes:

- A drip to give lifesaving fluids
- Anti-sickness medication
- Small bland meals frequently throughout the day
- Antibiotics - although they aren't always needed
- X-rays and / or blood tests for more information

- Most dogs with HGE are put into an isolation kennel away from other dogs to help stop the spread of HGE to other vulnerable dogs in the hospital

Outlook

Fortunately, most dogs treated for HGE make a full recovery within a few days and usually show a big improvement within 24 hours of receiving veterinary treatment.

If your dog isn't treated quickly, HGE can become a very serious condition and in some cases can cause death.

When to contact your vet

Contact your vet if your dog is showing any signs of HGE. If HGE is treated quickly it is likely your dog will make a full recovery within a few days. Left without treatment, dogs with HGE are likely to become dehydrated which can lead to severe illness and sometimes even death.

You know your dog best. If they don't have the symptoms listed above but you are still concerned then contact your vet.

Cost

Treatment for HGE can cost hundreds of pounds. Think about insuring your dog as soon as you get them, before any signs of illness start. This means you will have all the support you need if they become poorly. It's also very important to speak openly to your vet about your finances, the cost of treatment, as well as what you think is right for your dog.

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