**Kulshan Veterinary Hospital’s Healthy Pet Series**

**Managing Diarrhea in Your Dog: A Helpful Guide**



Diarrhea in dogs can be a common, yet concerning issue. It often resolves on its own, but it’s important to monitor your dog and provide the right care to ensure their health and comfort. Here's a simple guide to help you manage diarrhea in your dog.

**1. Understand the Causes**

Diarrhea can result from various causes, including:

* **Dietary Changes**: Switching foods or treats too quickly.
* **Infections**: Bacterial, viral, or parasitic infections.
* **Allergies**: Certain food ingredients or sensitivities.
* **Stress**: Changes in environment or routine.
* **Toxins**: Ingesting harmful substances like plants, chemicals, or spoiled food.
* **Underlying Health Conditions**: Diseases like pancreatitis, liver disease, or intestinal issues.

If diarrhea lasts more than 24 - 48 hours or is accompanied by other symptoms (vomiting, lethargy, blood in stool), consult your veterinarian immediately.

**2. Monitor Hydration**

Diarrhea can cause rapid dehydration, which is dangerous for your dog. Ensure your dog has access to fresh, clean water at all times. If they are not drinking enough, you can offer:

* **Electrolyte Solutions**: Specific pet electrolyte solutions are available or you can use non-flavored Pedialyte
* **Ice Cubes or Water Soaked Food**: To encourage drinking in smaller amounts.

Signs of dehydration to watch for:

* Dry gums or nose
* Sunken eyes
* Lethargy or weakness

**3. Withhold Food Temporarily (12-24 hours)**

For adult dogs, you can withhold food for 12-24 hours to give their digestive system time to recover. However, always provide water or an electrolyte solution during this period.

**Note:** Puppies, senior dogs, or dogs with other health issues should not be fasted without veterinary guidance.

**4. Gradually Reintroduce Food**

After the fasting period, slowly reintroduce food. Start with bland, easy-to-digest options such as:

* **Boiled Chicken (no skin or bones)** and **White Rice –** skim off fat from chicken and cook rice without seasoning
* **Boiled Ground Turkey** and **Pumpkin (plain)**

Feed small, frequent meals for 2-3 days before returning to their regular food. Gradually reintroduce their normal diet over the course of 3-5 days.

**5. Monitor Stool and Behavior**

Keep track of your dog's stool consistency and behavior during the recovery process. If diarrhea persists or worsens, or if there’s blood in the stool, it’s important to contact your veterinarian.

**6. Medications & Supplements**

Do not give your dog over-the-counter human medications (like Imodium) without consulting your vet. Certain medications can be harmful to dogs.

Your vet may recommend:

* **Proviable:** A probiotic to help restore healthy gut bacteria.
* **Diawin:** A charcoal-containing anti-diarrheal that helps to protect the gut and firm up the stool.
* **Cerenia\*:** An anti-emetic to stop GI cramping and any nausea that may occur
* **Antibiotics or Anthelmintics\***: If an infection or parasites are suspected.

\*Prescription products – may require an exam prior to dispensing

**7. Prevent Future Diarrhea**

* **Maintain a Consistent Diet:** Avoid abrupt food changes and limit table scraps.
* **Watch for Environmental Hazards:** Keep harmful substances and toxins out of reach.
* **Routine Vet Visits:** Regular check-ups to detect any underlying health conditions early.

**When to Seek Veterinary Help**

You should contact your veterinarian if your dog shows any of the following signs:

* Diarrhea lasts more than 48 hours
* Vomiting accompanies the diarrhea
* Blood or mucus in stool
* Lethargy or weakness
* Loss of appetite or refusal to drink water

**Remember:** Diarrhea can be a symptom of a mild issue or a sign of something more serious. Always err on the side of caution and consult your vet if you're unsure.

For more questions or concerns, reach out to your veterinarian. They are the best resource for ensuring your dog's health and well-being.

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