

GIARDIA CONTROL PROGRAMME

OVERVIEW

Giardia is a parasite carried by a large percentage of puppies but not every puppy shows signs of disease. The most common symptom is diarrhoea, often without a loss of appetite. Weight loss is also common. The state of the immune system is a major factor in determining whether disease occurs and some parts of the control protocol are aimed at supporting this and enhancing the normal beneficial bacterial population in the gut. The other important feature of the program is prevention of cross contamination using physical cleaning as well as disinfection of surfaces, bedding and food and water bowls. Quarantine and bathing of new puppies and the minimisation of mixing new pups with puppies that have been in the shop longer also helps prevent cross contamination and reinfection. Routine treatment of new puppies with febantel (present in Drontal Plus) has been recommended because there is some evidence that this is effective against Giardia and the elimination of any internal parasites will improve the immune system's ability to respond to other challenges. **Routine preventative courses of fenbendazole (Panacure) or metronidazole (Flagyl, Stomorgyl) are not suggested unless symptoms are present due to the possibility of creating further resistance to these medications.**

1 TREATMENT PROTOCOL FOR NEW PUPPIES

- Only weaned and apparently healthy puppies over 6 weeks of age, from fully vaccinated mothers and with body condition scores no less than 5/9 should be accepted
- New puppies should be held in a quarantine kennel away from the shop display kennels for at least 24 hours or until faeces have been passed
- Feed new puppies a prescription intestinal diet such as Hills i/d or Eukanuba low residue in a wet or dry form (which ever is closest to what the puppy has previously been fed or prefers) for at least 3 days. Gradually transition to puppy food over the following 3 days. Feed 3 times daily

- Provide fresh, clean water and change this at least twice daily. If faecal contamination of food or water occurs, the remaining food or water must be discarded immediately when noticed and bowls washed and disinfected before refilling and replacement. Water must be from a chlorinated or ozone treated source or from a water filter (preferably both).
- Give a broad spectrum worming treatment containing febantel (for example, Drontal Plus). Treat or prevent fleas using a long acting flea control product (for example, Frontline spray). Dose according to weight.
- If the puppy passes firm stools during the quarantine period, shampoo using an appropriate puppy product in warm water. Place in a freshly cleaned and disinfected cage and allow coat to dry before putting out on shop display.
- If the puppy has diarrhoea a sample should be checked for Giardia (Elisa testing is best). Fenbendazole (Panacur) treatment at 50mg/kg per day should be started immediately. Continue treatment for 5 days. Metronidazole treatment is another alternative. During this treatment the puppy should remain in quarantine either on or off premises. Following treatment, as long as faecal consistency has returned to normal, shampoo and put on shop display as previously described. However, treated pups should be kept in a separate display cage to those that have never been sick until repeat Elisa testing.
- It is advisable to repeat the Elisa test on a positive puppy 7 days after the last treatment dose to be sure of successful cure.
- Do not allow members of the public or staff to handle pups from separate cages without thoroughly washing hands or using an instant hand sanitising product in between.

2 CAGE CLEANING AND DISINFECTION

- Puppies should be put in a clean portable cage during cleaning of their regular cages. Puppies from separate cages should not be mixed. (Paper in the portable cage should be changed with each batch of puppies). Remove

paper from permanent cages and put into bins for disposal. Remove bedding and wash according to protocol below.

- Wash food and water bowls with each food and water change using hot soapy water and dry with a clean tea towel. If faecal contamination has occurred, disinfect bowls with Vetgene solution at 1 in 100 dilution, allow 1 minute contact time then rinse off residue with clean water. Dry before refilling. At least daily, soak in a solution of Vetgene at a solution of 100 to 1 with clean water
- Scrub cages at least once daily (or more frequently if soiled) using warm soapy water. Dried faecal matter may require scraping to remove. Wear gloves.
- Dry cage with a towel.
- Apply Vetgene solution (1 in 100 strength) with a sponge or spray to all surfaces of the cage. Allow at least 1 minute contact time. Wipe again with clean hot water to remove disinfectant residue.
- Allow to either air dry or dry with another clean towel before applying fresh paper and bedding.

1 LAUNDRY PROCEDURES

- Launder drybeds and towels by one of 3 methods :
 - Hot wash (90-95 degrees Celsius) and allow to dry naturally in sunlight or in a drier set on the hot cycle.
 - Cold wash with Halamid enriched laundry powder added to the washing machine at the rate of 150 grams for a top loader and 100 grams for a front loader. Dry in sunlight or in a clothes drier set on the hot cycle.
 - Cold wash with Vetgene added to the final rinse or with the fabric softener at the rate of 50 mls for a top loader and 50 mls for a front loader. Dry in sunlight or in a clothes drier set on the hot cycle.

Staff precautions when handling dogs with suspected Giardia

Always wear gloves when handling sick dogs or cleaning up after sick dogs, change gloves or wash your gloved hands in between treating different dogs.

Wash hands thoroughly after handling sick dogs or cleaning up after them.

Handle dogs as little as possible to minimise cross contamination, wear protective clothing over your uniform when handling sick dogs (for example a cheap disposable apron)

Don't kiss dogs or let them lick you as it is suspected that Giardia can be spread to humans; this is not certain but it is better to err on the side of caution.