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# **Diarrhoea in Pups**

There are many causes of diarrhoea in puppies. In our pups, we have protocols around preventatives and vaccinations that make infective causes of diarrhoea uncommon. So the most common cause of diarrhoea in our pups is stress. Mild, short lived stress with adequate emotional support can improve the resilience in pups, but prolonged stress, especially at times when the pup does not have support will be detrimental to pup welfare, in the form of disease or poor behaviour development.

This stress can be from

1. Cold or Heat Stress – the zone at which adult dogs do not need to expend energy to maintain their temperature is 20-30oC. Outside these temperatures their body is working to maintain a normal body temperature. For puppies the range is smaller. A room temperature of 22-23oC is ideal for any pup over 2 weeks.
2. Noise Stress – Unusual or loud noises can cause stress to pups.
3. Inadequate emotional support – most pups do best when loved! Talk to them, cuddle them, and make them feel loved. If they are showing signs of not enjoying the attention, then allow them to be alone.
4. Too much attention – some pups do not enjoy cuddles. Give the pups the choice to remove themselves if they feel uncomfortable.
5. Inability to sleep – puppies are like babies and require large amounts of sleeping time. Limit the amount of time that the pups have visitors.
6. Rapid changes in the environment – changes like transporting the pups can cause stress. If this is to occur, ensure other methods of support are available to the pups and other stressors are not added on.
7. Overcrowding – ensure all pups have enough space, and separate pups into smaller groups as they mature to enable this and reduce bullying.

## Diarrhoea in Litter, No blood, Pups Otherwise Well.

If a litter develops diarrhoea but is still bright and happy, not vomiting and there is no blood in the stools, please do the following

1. Lectade™ – give 1/2 strength Lectade™ in a separate water bowl to the litter and ensure all pups are drinking. Lectade™ will provide fluids, electrolytes and glucose. If they are drinking excessively, then reduce to 1/4 strength Lectade™. Always ensure there is fresh water available, too.
2. Blackhawk Puppy chicken – continue with same diet (feed through diarrhoea) but divide regular feed into smaller, more frequent meals.
3. Pron8ureTM – 1gm/day on morning feed.
4. Ensal™ - Ensal™ can be given if the diarrhoea is a grade 5, or a grade 4.5 and not responding to the above measures after 24 hours. Give twice daily for 2 days.

## G5 Diarrhoea in Litter, Blood present, Pups Otherwise Well.

If a litter develops diarrhoea, is still bright and happy, not vomiting, but there is blood present in the stools, please do the following

1. Lectade™ – give 1/2 strength Lectade™ in a separate water bowl to the litter and ensure all pups are drinking. Lectade™ will provide fluids, electrolytes and glucose. If they are drinking excessively, then reduce to 1/4 strength Lectade™. Always ensure there is fresh water available, too.
2. Blackhawk Puppy chicken – continue with same diet (feed through diarrhoea) but divide regular feed into smaller, more frequent meals.
3. Pron8ureTM – 1gm/day on morning feed.
4. Scourban™ - Scourban™ can be given if there is blood in the stools. In pups this generally only happens with G5 diarrhoea. Give twice daily for 3 days. Stop if the faeces have been normal for 24 hours as it can cause constipation.

## G5 diarrhoea, Pup unwell, Possible vomiting

If a pup is unwell, visit the vet team. If the vet room is closed, call or text the vet on call or email GDC- Vet Team.

If you are concerned and cannot contact the vet, take the pup to Quakers Hill Vets or Vineyard Vets. Do not wait until you are about to leave for the night.

With pups, they most commonly will become lethargic because of dehydration, electrolyte loss or lack of glucose. Very rarely, they can develop an intussusception where the bowel can become compromised. These pups are very flat, usually vomit many times, have abdominal pain and do not respond to fluids or simple treatments.

The following are normal processes for treatment of simple gastroenteritis that the vets will most likely ask you to perform if they are not concerned about an intussusception. Most pups will improve with these measures within a couple of hours, and it is easier to get a good response if this is done earlier rather than later.

1. Health check – check the temperature, gum colour, skin turgor (tenting), and gently feel the abdomen. We do not expect you to diagnose any conditions, just get a baseline to assess if treatments are working.
2. Prevomax™ - Give one dose of Prevomax™ via a subcutaneous injection according to the chart for body weight.
3. Lectade™ - Give full strength Lectade™ via a syringe (no needle attached) into the mouth according to the Lectade™ chart for body weight. Ensure 1/2 Strength Lectade™ is available in the cage/ kennel.
4. Keep separated from rest of litter mates until 24 hours after vomiting has ceased and the pup is well in himself.
5. Monitor regularly for signs of deterioration and recontact vet if this occurs.
6. Blackhawk Puppy chicken – continue with same diet (feed through diarrhoea) but divide regular feed into smaller, more frequent meals.
7. Pron8ureTM – 1gm/day on morning feed.
8. Scourban™ - Give twice daily for 2-5 days.

# **Diarrhoea Protocol for Puppy Raisers**

Your Guide Dog puppy may experience episodes of changing faecal consistency during their time with you. It is important for you to know what is *normal* and what isn’t, and when it is necessary to seek veterinary attention.

Stools may vary in consistency within normal healthy dogs. Things such as diet or environmental change may also affect stool consistency. This is of particular concern with puppies who are still developing their normal gut flora.

In order to help identify and describe a stool sample, we use the **Waltham Faecal Scoring System**. As a general guide, a grade between **2.5 to 3.5** is considered *acceptable*. A **grade 4 or above** is considered *diarrhoea* and should be treated.

## Uncomplicated Diarrhoea

This is diarrhoea (grade 4 or above) that is not associated with other signs of being unwell such as fever, vomiting, lack of energy or loss of appetite.

As a general rule, this is **not an emergency** and can be dealt with as follows:

* Advise your PDA of the occurrence, particularly if happening for more than one bowel motion
* If the next bowel motion is normal, no treatment is required – just monitor
* If continued grade 4 or above, skip next meal to allow for some GI rest
* Ensure plenty of water and encourage to drink
* Continue with Blackhawk puppy chicken but divide regular diet into smaller, more frequent feeds (4-5x daily)
* Once the diarrhoea has resolved than can return to regular feeding regime
* Start Pron8ure in morning feed
* If there is **no response** or the dog progresses to **complicated diarrhoea** then contact the PDA and/or GDC Vet team to discuss.

## **Complicated Diarrhoea**

This is diarrhoea associated with other signs of being unwell such as fever, vomiting, lack of energy or loss of appetite. The following may also occur:

* Blood in the stool
* Persists more than 3 days despite management (dogs > 12 weeks of age)
* Persists with no improvement for more than 12 hours (puppies < 12 weeks of age)

This is considered **an emergency** and requires veterinary attention. Contact the GDC Veterinary team and they will advised on further action. Please collect a faecal sample so that the vet team may perform further testing if required.

If after-hours, then take your pup to the nearest Guide Dogs approved veterinarian.

# **Feeding Adults with Blackhawk and Diarrhoea**

1. Start with transition to Blackhawk Adult chicken and rice over 7 ds.
   1. If any loose stools develop – slow down to 14 day transition.
   2. If loose stools (grade 4 or below) persist on current feeding ratio for 3 days contact vet. Possible trial of psyllium.
   3. If grade 5 develops, dog unwell or loose stools longer than 3 days then stop and contact vet.
2. Return to original diet that the dog had normal stools with for at least one week until stools normalise.
3. Next, trial transition to Blackhawk Grain Free Salmon (14-day transition). Follow as above.
4. Return to original diet that the dog had normal stools with for at least one week until stools normalise.
5. If still unable to get normal stools then trial Blackhawk Sensitive Skin and Gut over a 14 day transition.
6. Return to original diet that the dog had normal stools with for at least one week until stools normalise.
7. Persistent GI issue after this require vet attention and likely prescription diet +/- further work up.

If dog is already on Adult food and has acute gastrointestinal disease (vomiting and diarrhoea)

1. Divide normal diet into 4-5 smaller meals and give throughout the day. E.G. If the dog normally gets 2 cups food in the evening, then give ½ cup at 9am, 12pm, 3pm and 6pm.
2. If the faeces are not improving, then contact vet and add psyllium and probiotics.