



The Best Place to Adopt a Pet

Diarrhea in newly adopted dogs

You've just adopted a dog from Humane Society Silicon Valley and upon getting home, your new pet runs into your yard and promptly has... diarrhea. What should you do?

Sometimes, newly adopted dogs will develop a mild and short episode of diarrhea when they move in with their new families. As you can imagine, it can be a little stressful for dogs to adjust to a new environment, new family, and new routine. Stress induced diarrhea can be self limiting and resolve once the dogs adjust to their new lifestyle. You can help your new companions alleviate some of their stress by providing a predictable routine for them by taking them for walks and feeding at set times of the day. Additionally, starting training with them such as by attending a class will provide a structured time for you to bond with your new family member and for them to learn how to interact with you.

Some dogs benefit from a bland diet when they move in with their new families. This gives their digestive tract a chance to not have to work as hard to digest their food. Bland diets are composed of an easily digestible protein and carbohydrate source. The most common bland diet is low fat cottage cheese and cooked white rice mixed in a one to one ratio. This diet should be fed about 4 times a day in smaller amounts than their regular food diet. They should get very little to no treats at this time. Most dogs will have stool quality improvement within 2-3 days of eating this diet. Once their stool quality shows improvement, gradually mix in their regular food with the bland diet and decrease the number of meals back to twice daily. The recommended mix is 75% bland diet mixed with 25% regular food. See how the dog does on this mix for a couple of days. If the stool continues to improve, then increase the amount of regular food to 50% of the diet and see how the dog does for another couple of days. If stool quality does not worsen, then increase the regular food by another 25% for a couple of days until you are just feeding regular food. If stool quality deteriorates or worsens during this transition time, you may have to go backwards until stool quality improves and move through the stages of increasing regular food a bit more slowly. If you don't want to cook for your new dog, the HSSV Medical Center carries 3 different brands of prescription diets to help dogs with stress induced diarrhea. These are: Hill's Prescription diet i/d which comes in dry and canned formulation; Iams Low Residue which comes only in a dry puppy formula and a dry and canned adult formulation; Royal Canine Intestinal HD diet which comes in dry and canned formulation. The benefit to all of these prescription bland digestible diets is that they are nutritionally complete and can be fed long term under the direction of a veterinarian. If you want to feed these diets just until stool quality improves, you should gradually mix in your dog's regular food in the same manner as with the cottage cheese and rice diet.

HSSV's Medical Center also sells a dietary supplement called Prostora™ Max from Iams. Prostora™ Max contains probiotics or beneficial intestinal tract bacteria specific to dogs which help to promote digestive health and regulating digestion to get elimination back to normal.

Diarrhea is not always due to stress. If your dog had normal stools for at least a week to 10 days after adoption and then develops diarrhea, or their activity and appetite decreases while they are having diarrhea, or the diarrhea is protracted lasting longer than 5-7 days, then this could indicate that your dog's diarrhea is not due to stress but some other, possibly more serious, medical condition and you should contact your veterinarian to examine your dog.

Stress diarrhea

- 🐾 Occurs when dogs encounter a new and potentially stressful situation
- 🐾 Activity and Appetite remains normal
- 🐾 Responsive to bland diet

Bland diet feeding regimen

100% bland diet for 2-3 days or until stool quality starts to improve

Add regular food to bland diet at 25% regular to 75% bland and feed for 2-3 days and monitor stool quality

If stools continue to improve, add 50% regular food to 50% bland diet and feed for 2-3 days

- 🐾 Increase regular food by 25% as long as stool quality remains improved
- 🐾 If stool quality deteriorates, go back to previous balance of regular to bland food and add regular food in lesser amounts to maintain improved stool quality
- 🐾 Add Iams Proctora™ Max to help regulate digestion

Call your veterinarian if

- 🐾 Your dog has diarrhea that lasts longer than 5-7 days with no improvement despite bland diet
- 🐾 Your dog has diarrhea with a concurrent decrease in activity and appetite no matter how many days

