

# Stomach upsets

Upset stomachs in dogs are a common health problem and most dogs and puppies of all breeds suffer from an upset stomach from time to time. Although most dogs recover spontaneously, it's best to have your pet checked by the vet if his symptoms persist for more than 24 hours. As a pet owner, you should learn to recognise the signs and symptoms so that the upset stomach is treated at the earliest. The condition shouldn't be ignored as it can lead to other complications.

## Causes of an Upset Stomach in Dogs

There are various causes for upset stomach in dogs. Overeating or under eating can upset your pet's stomach. Besides this, pets that ingest toxic substances or decomposed food may show signs of an upset stomach. Infections by bacteria or viruses, food allergies, changes in the diet, motion sickness, worms and trauma are some of the other causes of upset stomach in dogs.

A dog suffering from pancreatitis or bowel disorders can also suffer from an upset stomach. Young puppies develop the condition because they eat food that can't be digested by their underdeveloped digestive systems. Stress is another cause of an upset stomach in dogs and pets that are excitable and nervous by nature are more susceptible to this ailment.

## Symptoms of an Upset Stomach in Dogs

The symptoms of an upset stomach in dogs manifest themselves suddenly. A healthy dog might suddenly appear very sick. A pet with an upset stomach will seek solitude and want a cool, dark place to lie down. He will appear depressed and disinterested in his surroundings. The pet will also frequently pass watery stools that may contain blood in some instances. Lethargy and fatigue are other common symptoms

## Other Symptoms

Pets suffering from an upset stomach will vomit frequently and show signs of excessive thirst. The vomit might also contain blood. You will find that your pet will exhibit symptoms of a capricious appetite and have little or no interest in the food set out for him. Excessive burping and unusually foul smelling breath are other symptoms.

The dog's stomach will appear bloated. He will also cry out in pain as he ingests food because of the discomfort present. Most pets will also pace around after the meal to ease the stomach ache they're suffering from. The above mentioned symptoms may be accompanied by high fever.

## Treatments for an Upset Stomach in Dogs:

- Withhold food for a day while providing your pet with plenty of drinking water
- After this period, feed your pet bland home-made food instead of commercial dog food that might contain added chemicals and preservatives
- Add yogurt to your pet's food as the bacteria in the yogurt can reduce intestinal inflammation and regulate the pet's bowel movements.
- Add probiotics to your pet's food

If the upset stomach persists beyond 24 hours, medical assistance should be sought. Failure to treat your dog at the earliest can lead to complications such as dehydration, chronic diarrhoea which could eventuate in drastic weight loss.

## Major potential complications:

A severe complication of continual stomach upsets and vomiting can be a resultant twisted stomach (gastric torsion), which is an emergency situation which must be attended to by a veterinarian

immediately. If you own a deep chested dog such as a Labrador Retriever, Doberman Pinscher, Akita or Great Dane your dog is much more prone to this condition. It can also happen to other breeds.

The signs of gastric torsion are excessive salivation and drooling, extreme restlessness, attempts to vomit and defaecate, evidence of abdominal pain (the dog whines and groans when you push on the stomach wall) and abdominal distension.