

Elands Veterinary Clinic.

CLIENT INFORMATION SHEET.

DIARRHOEA AND VOMITING



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All animals may occasionally vomit or have loose motions. However if this occurs throughout a period exceeding 24 hours for diarrhoea, or with increasing frequency for vomiting, then it is important to contact your veterinary surgeon.

Diarrhoea is a fairly common and very messy problem which we encounter with our pets. It may be due to dietary overload or simply to a change of diet (e.g. all the leftover Sunday lunch scraps, including apple pie and cream), eating rubbish (e.g. a carcass found on a pleasant walk through the woods), or due to infectious diseases contracted from other animals (e.g. Parvovirus in dogs, salmonella or even campylobacter infection from humans). Blockage of the gut (e.g. swallowing fruit stones, bones or rubber balls, string or other strange objects) can be a very serious problem and will often cause vomiting. Some of these cases require surgery to remove the offending object. Dogs in particular vomit quite easily, and will often show both vomiting and diarrhoea when they contract gastroenteritis. It is important to seek professional advice about your pet's problem and **TO FOLLOW THE ADVICE GIVEN**. On many occasions this will be as follows:

1. STARVE FOR 24 HOURS. Only water or honey and water, or an electrolyte solution such as Lectade® should be given by mouth. Only small quantities should be given at a time, and this should be at body temperature. This means that the bacteria which are over-multiplying in the gut are starved of further food on which to grow, giving the gut a chance to heal.

2. RE-INTRODUCE FOOD SLOWLY. Initially you should start with a **LOW RESIDUE PRESCRIPTION DIET** such as Pedigree Selected Protein or Hills I/D or C/D which are obtainable from your vet, and are specifically designed for this purpose. They contain all the correct nutrient requirements for your pet, and save you the bother of preparing fresh food for each meal. Alternatively a *white meat diet* (chicken or fish, steamed or boiled, and fed with plain boiled rice) can be fed. Regardless of which diet you choose, it is important to feed little and often. As long as the diarrhoea continues to lessen, the size of the meals can be slowly increased and the normal food reintroduced after about four or five days. Again, do this gradually over several days, mixing the normal food in with the bland diet. If you try and short-cut this procedure you may well upset things and be back where you started!

3. GIVE ANY MEDICATION DISPENSED. The aim of these medicaments will be to control the symptoms and control the cause of the problem. It is important that the course of medication is finished otherwise you may find the problem will not completely clear up or may recur.

4. MAINTAIN A ROUTINE WORMING PROGRAMME

Keeping your pet worm free not only helps prevent digestive upsets and other problems for your pet, but can also help prevent infestation passing to children where it can, rarely, cause serious problems. Some wormers are more effective and/or more suitable than others. We recommend worming your pet at least four times a year, and more frequently if you have young children or if your cat is a good hunter! Please feel free to ask your vet or veterinary nurse for advice on the most effective treatment for your pet.

5. DIET. One of the most common causes of gastrointestinal upsets is diet. Dietary sensitivities can occur at any age and the recipe for most commercial dog and cat foods is not fixed, so ingredients change from time to time. There are a number of excellent, *high quality fixed recipe*, foods on the market now, - we recommend the **Hills Science Plan** range. These diets are specifically designed for different stages of your pet's life, from juvenile to senior citizen, and are formulated to help reduce the incidence of obesity and liver or kidney disease which can often develop as animals grow older. We are happy to advise on the most suitable diet for your pet. Remember, you have total control over your pet's diet, and a healthy diet can have a tremendous influence over all aspects of health and disease, from skin, heart or kidney problems to obesity and arthritis.

Above all remember that if the animal is not responding to treatment or you find any further signs developing (e.g. vomiting) you should contact us again. We may need to alter the treatment or take blood samples, X-rays or examine a faeces sample to investigate the problem further,

