

# How to Help a Pet with Diarrhea?

Diarrhea in pets can be a troublesome condition for both the pet and its owner. When should you consult a specialist? How can you handle this problem, and how can you help your pet at home? We answer these questions in the following article.

## What Causes Diarrhea in pets?

Let's start by understanding what causes diarrhea in pets. Diarrhea occurs due to an excessive amount of water in the stool, caused by the large intestine secreting too much fluid. Diarrhea can be either acute or chronic. Acute diarrhea refers to a sudden onset that passes quickly lasting less than two weeks. It often resolves on its own and doesn't require medical attention.

Common causes of acute diarrhea include:

- **Food poisoning – the pet ate spoiled or unsuitable food,**
- **Sudden change in diet,**
- **Stress,**
- **Viral, bacterial, or parasitic infections,**
- **Toxin poisoning.**

## How to Help a Pet with Acute Diarrhea?

First and foremost, ensure your pet has access to fresh water. Also, follow a light diet, and if symptoms persist for more than 48 hours, consult a veterinarian.

Chronic diarrhea, lasting longer than two weeks, can be linked to more serious conditions.

Common causes include:

- **Infections or inflammation of the digestive system,**
- **Food allergies or intolerances,**
- **Systemic diseases like liver or pancreas issues,**
- **Parasite infections,**
- **Autoimmune diseases affecting the digestive tract.**

Chronic diarrhea can lead to appetite loss and weight loss. A sick animal may be lethargic. To prevent serious consequences, appropriate treatment should be initiated promptly.

## Symptoms of Diarrhea in Dogs

Diarrhea in dogs can come with various symptoms. The most obvious sign is loose or watery stool, often in large amounts. Additionally, the dog may suffer from bloating, gas, and other gastrointestinal issues such as:

- **Abdominal pain,**
- **Lethargy,**
- **Loss of appetite,**
- **Weight loss,**
- **Dangerous dehydration,**
- **Straining during defecation, even with loose stools.**

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All these symptoms are concerning, but a dog owner should especially pay attention to blood, excess mucus, or visible parasites in the stool. Black, tarry stool can indicate bleeding in the upper digestive tract.

## Common Causes of Diarrhea in Dogs

The most common reasons for diarrhea in dogs include:

### Diet Change

One frequent cause of diarrhea is a sudden change in food. If the transition is too quick, the dog's digestive system may not adapt. Diarrhea can also be a sign of a food allergy or intolerance. To avoid problems, change the diet gradually over at least a week while observing the dog's reactions.

### Food Poisoning

Dogs often eat things on walks that they shouldn't, leading to food poisoning, which can cause diarrhea, vomiting, stomach pain, and sometimes fever and seizures. In this case, it's crucial to contact a veterinarian as soon as possible and refrain from feeding the dog until the visit, while ensuring proper hydration.

### Viral Infections

Diarrhea can also result from viral infections, such as parvovirus, coronavirus, or rotavirus. These diseases are particularly dangerous, especially for puppies. If diarrhea is accompanied by fever, vomiting, lethargy, and loss of appetite, visit a veterinarian immediately.

### Bacterial Infections

Bacteria like Salmonella, E. coli, or Campylobacter can also cause diarrhea in dogs. Symptoms often resemble those of food poisoning, so watch out for vomiting, fever, or blood in the stool.

## Digestive System Diseases

Diarrhea can frequently be a symptom of gastrointestinal issues. Common digestive diseases in dogs include:

- **Gastritis,**
- **Pancreatitis,**
- **Inflammatory bowel disease,**
- **Gastrointestinal tumors.**

As with other cases, it's impossible to diagnose these conditions independently, so if your dog has diarrhea along with other alarming symptoms, consult a veterinarian.

## Parasites

Parasites like roundworms, tapeworms, or hookworms can also cause diarrhea. Additional symptoms include lethargy, a dull coat, vomiting, bloating, and itching around the anus. It's essential to regularly deworm your pet and have a stool examination at least once a year as a preventive measure.

## Home Remedies for Diarrhea – How to Help Your Pet?

If the diarrhea isn't accompanied by alarming symptoms, you can help your pet with a few home remedies:

- **Fasting:** A short fast (12-24 hours) can help calm the stomach.
- **Appropriate Diet:** Light, easily digestible food like boiled potatoes, cottage cheese, eggs, yogurt, rice, or chicken can help ease symptoms.
- **Hydration:** Ensure the dog has constant access to water. You can add broth without spices to the water to increase its nutritional value and provide electrolytes.
- **Supplements:** Proper supplementation can significantly support the body's recovery, especially in cases like diarrhea or issues with intestinal flora. Products like DiarVet from VET EXPERT, a brand recommended by veterinarians in Poland, can be given to cats or small breed dogs. This supplement helps firm up the stool and supports bacterial balance in the intestines. Only one capsule a day is needed, and it can be given as a treat or mixed with food.

## When to Visit the Vet?

If diarrhea lasts longer than two days, is accompanied by vomiting, lack of appetite, lethargy, or other worrisome symptoms, a veterinarian visit is essential. The vet will conduct diagnostic tests and prescribe appropriate treatments like antibiotics, probiotics, or anti-diarrheal medications.

In most cases, diarrhea in dogs is mild and short-lived, with the cause often being a diet change or consumption of something unsuitable. With a little care, the symptoms should resolve in a few days.



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