

Vomiting

Episodes of vomiting are a common complaint which many pet owners will experience during the lifetime of their companion. It can understandably be very unpleasant for owners to manage and uncomfortable for the animal to experience so it is best addressed promptly. We often recommend a couple of days of bland food if the patient is otherwise well but if the issue does not resolve then further assistance may be recommended.

There are many reasons that a patient can experience periods of gastric upset, usually as a response to the stomach or intestines being insulted by an unusual food (rich tidbits) or toxin (for example, chocolate) or potentially in conjunction with an virus or disease such as pancreatitis. On some occasions, vomiting can be in response to a blockage within the gastrointestinal system, causing material to back up and need to be expelled.

To get to the root of the cause, vets commonly ask what your pet has been eating recently to see if the cause could be referred to as 'acute'. This is when the body is reacting to a sudden introduction to something new or undesirable; causing the body to try to evacuate what has been consumed.

Dehydration can happen very quickly, especially if the animal is very young or elderly, so if your pet is not able to consume and retain enough fluid, the animal will be at a deficit which can start affecting the function of the major organs. If the vomiting episode persists for a prolonged period, it is categorized as 'chronic' and greater levels of investigation will be recommended in an effort to get seek a diagnosis. Some animals suffer from lifelong conditions which cause vomiting or regurgitation; they are regularly monitored by a vet and often require supportive dietary supplements, specialized food or medications.

Diagnosis:

Your vet will carry out a physical exam, where they will discuss the patients signs and symptoms and in some cases review images or sample of the vomit. They will likely recommend a blood test so monitor the organs for signs of distress, infection or underlying conditions.

X-rays or ultrasounds may be performed to further assess if there any blockages or foreign items stuck in the tract. A surgery may be necessary to remove a foreign item if it is lodged/ at risk of causing trauma, or to obtain biopsy samples to help attain a diagnosis.

Clinical signs of concern:

The signs of gastric upset may vary from mild to severe. Signs which would be of concern may include any of the following:

- Lethargy
- Abdominal (Stomach) Pain (Bowing position)
- Stomach bloating
- Blood in vomit (Brown-coloured)
- Faeces in vomit (Foul smelling)
- Suspected ingestion of a toxin/poison
- Suspected ingestion of a foreign item e.g. a stick, corn cob etc
- Anorexia (refusal to eat)
- Unable to keep fluid down

IMPORTANT!

**If you notice any of the above symptoms
please contact your vet immediately!**

Treatment – can vary widely based on what the vet diagnoses, here are some possible examples:

- Dietary management (elimination of known irritants)
- Blood testing ○ Pro-biotics ○ Gastro-protectant Medication ○Antibiotics ○Anti-emetics (sickness)
- Surgery (in the event of obstruction) ○ Intravenous medication ○ Hospitalisation for fluid therapy ○Antibiotics



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