

CRGV/ 'Alabama Rot' NEWSLETTER: June 2015

Cutaneous and renal glomerular vasculopathy (CRGV or 'Alabama rot') is a serious disease which has only recently been recognised in dogs in the UK. It causes lesions on the skin and occasionally in the mouth, which can look like bites, sores, wounds or stings. Some dogs go on to develop life-threatening kidney failure. Any age, sex, or breed of dog can be affected

The disease has been under investigation by Anderson Moores Veterinary Specialists (working closely with a number of other organisations) for almost 3 years. Many possible causes, such as common bacterial infections and exposure to toxins, have been ruled out.



What is CRGV?

CRGV is a disease caused by damage to blood vessels of the skin and kidney. It causes tiny blood clots to form in the blood vessels which blocks them and can ultimately lead to damage of the affected tissue. In the skin, this causes ulceration; however, in the kidney it can lead to severe organ dysfunction (kidney failure)

What causes CRGV?

The cause at this time remains unknown but investigations are ongoing.

How do I stop my dog from getting CRGV?

Unfortunately, as the cause is currently unknown, it is very difficult to give specific advice about prevention. You may wish to consider bathing any area of your dog which becomes wet or muddy on a walk; however, at this stage we do not know if this is necessary or of any benefit.

Where should I walk my dog to avoid CRGV?

Cases of CRGV have been reported from across many different counties in the UK and we are not currently advising dog owners to avoid any particular locations. Although an environmental cause for this disease is considered possible it has not been proven with testing to date.

How will I know if my dog gets CRGV?

Unexplained redness, sores or swelling of the skin (particularly on the paws or legs but also the body, face, tongue or mouth) are often the first sign of this disease. It is important to remember that most of the time a skin problem will NOT be caused by CRGV; however, the lesions in CRGV can be difficult to distinguish from cuts, wounds, stings or bites, so if in doubt it is better to seek veterinary advice.

Even if the skin changes are caused by CRGV, many dogs will not develop kidney problems and will recover fully.

KEY MESSAGE: although CRGV can be very serious, the number of dogs affected with skin lesions and kidney failure remains low (56 confirmed cases across the UK between November '12 and May '15)

Recent work by the senior curator of herbology, from the Natural History Museum, suggests that plants are an unlikely trigger for CRGV





How is CRGV treated?

If your dog develops a skin lesion your vet will be able to advise you on the most appropriate management. Your vet will decide if your dog needs antibiotics and if the area needs covering. Some forms of painkiller (called non-steroidals) may be best avoided.

Dogs developing kidney failure (which is called acute kidney injury) will need much more intensive management and your vet may recommend referral to a specialist.

What can I do to help?

There are many ways in which owners of all dogs can get involved to raise awareness of CRGV and to participate in and fundraise for ongoing research

Fundraising

Research into new diseases requires a lot of funding. This pays for the development of new diagnostic tests, investigation of the causes of the disease and ultimately the development of more effective treatments

- **The New Forest Dog Owners Group:** set up a research fund for CRGV in 2014. If you would like to donate or participate in fundraising please visit www.newforestdog.org.uk
- **A new charity dedicated solely to CRGV is currently being set up – further details to follow soon.....**

Research

CRGV questionnaire: Anderson Moores worked with the Animal Health Trust to develop a questionnaire for dog owners. This can be completed by any dog owner and gives valuable information regarding whether or not there are differences between how dogs who develop CRGV live versus dogs who do not develop CRGV. This can be found at:

www.aht.org.uk/cms-display/aki.html

Samples: AMVS are currently running 2 studies to look at reasons why some dogs develop CRGV whilst others do not. If your dog requires blood tests during their stay at AMVS, you can give consent for their blood samples to be used in these studies.

More information

Is CRGV the same illness as seasonal canine illness (SCI)? No – these are 2 completely separate illnesses causing different signs. SCI causes vomiting, diarrhoea and lethargy with no ulcerative skin lesions

Can dogs get CRGV all year round? Over the last 3 years, more CRGV cases have been seen between November and May than between June and October, suggesting a possible Winter / Spring seasonality.

Does CRGV affect other animals or humans? CRGV has not been seen in animals other than dogs. Owners of dogs affected by CRGV have not been affected by this illness.

Please visit our website for further details, including links to the scientific paper on CRGV published March 2015

www.AndersonMoores.com

AndersonMoores
your veterinary specialists

We are a multidisciplinary specialist referral hospital for cats and dogs, situated near Winchester, Hampshire