



# Outbreak of prolific vomiting in dogs

## Information for owners

28th February 2020

On the 24th January 2020, researchers in SAVSNET (Small Animal Veterinary Surveillance Network) at University of Liverpool became aware of increasing cases of prolific vomiting (five or more times in 12 hours) in dogs in the Merseyside region. There were also suggestions from other veterinary and media reports that this could be more widespread.

Based on responses to an online questionnaire received by vets and nurses (as of 6th February 2020), veterinary practices are now reporting quite widespread disease throughout England and Wales, particularly in North West and Southern England, with a small number of reported cases originating from Northern Ireland and Scotland.

Using data collected by SAVSNET at University of Liverpool from a large number of volunteer veterinary practices and laboratories across the UK, we have also identified a rise in cases of gastroenteric disease starting in November 2019. Key messages are: The vast majority of affected dogs make a full recovery with routine symptomatic veterinary therapy. There is no known risk to people or other animals. If you are worried about the health of your dog then you should phone your veterinary practice. If an owner has a dog that is vomiting or has diarrhoea, then as always, it is advisable to limit contact with other dogs.

We are working with colleagues at Universities of Lancaster, Bristol and Manchester to better understand the scale and cause of this outbreak.

We will post updates as we have them to

[https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/savsnet/dog\\_vomiting\\_potential\\_outbreak/](https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/savsnet/dog_vomiting_potential_outbreak/)



SAVSNET, the Small Animal Veterinary Surveillance Network at University of Liverpool was established in 2008 to better understand the health and disease of pet animals in the UK ([www.liverpool.ac.uk/savsnet/](http://www.liverpool.ac.uk/savsnet/)).

Our key research priorities have been to define antibiotic use and resistance in pet animals, to explore how climate affects disease, and to better understand the pattern of infectious diseases across the UK. This work is made possible by data supplied by a network of volunteer veterinary practices and diagnostic laboratories across the UK and by funding from the British Small Animal Veterinary Association, the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council and Dogs Trust.



## How concerned should I be?

We are vets and pet owners. We understand you will be concerned. However, even at this early stage where we are still trying to understand what is happening, owners should be reassured as it is clear that affected dogs usually make a full recovery with routine symptomatic veterinary therapy. There is no known risk to people. If you are concerned about your dog, then we advise that you phone their vet.

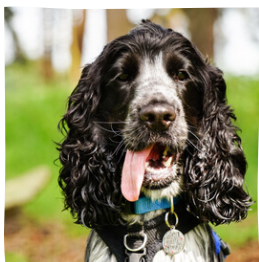


## Have any dogs died?

Whilst we are aware of a small number of dogs that have unfortunately died showing similar symptoms, we cannot be sure whether they are all related to the current potential outbreak. What is absolutely clear is that the vast majority of dogs usually make a full recovery with routine symptomatic veterinary therapy.

## What should I do if my dog is vomiting?

If you are worried about the health of your pet, you should call your veterinary practice. They are in the best position to give you locally relevant advice. If you have a dog that is vomiting or has diarrhoea, then as always, it is advisable to limit contact with other dogs, and where other dogs walk, until the clinical signs in your own dog have completely cleared. As far as we know there is no risk to humans. However, it makes complete sense to handle vomit and faeces from your dog carefully, to disinfect contaminated areas, and to wash your hands carefully afterwards.



## My dog is not vomiting - should I change what I do?

At this early stage in the investigation, and in the absence of a precise cause, it is difficult for us to provide an assessment of risk of dog walking to an individual dog. Clearly dog walks are hugely beneficial to dogs and their owners, and this should be balanced against any possible risk. The main message has to be for owners of poorly dogs .....if you own a dog that is vomiting or has diarrhoea, then you should limit its contact with other dogs until your own dog has completely recovered.

## What about people with groups of dogs?

People responsible for places where dogs can gather will probably already have a policy for dealing with the inevitable occasionally poorly dog. This is likely to be sufficient, but they should review it. Clearly, dogs that are vomiting or have diarrhoea should not be mixing with other dogs.



## Do we know what the cause is?

We are collecting samples from affected dogs to try and find out. Possible candidates for a potential outbreak like this are infectious diseases, food-borne or environmental factors.