



Giardia Lamblia (AKA giardiasis or beaver fever)

Symptoms:

Loss of appetite, diarrhoea, nausea, stomach pain, gas, bloating, weight loss.

The most common means of infestation comes from ingestion of water that has been infected by an organism in the fecal matter of fish and other animals. Animals tend to be more resistant to it than humans are and the severity of the infestation depends on the overall health of the host! Symptoms manifest after 7-10 days after ingestion. It can also occur from contaminated food as well.

The organism infects the lining of the digestive tract and can invade the liver. Malabsorption of nutrients occurs when the parasites damage the absorptive surface of the intestinal lining (intestinal villi). If it is left untreated it can lead to other diseases such as eczema, arthritis and irritable bowel/chrones disease.

According to www.wikipedia.org (on-line encyclopedia) it is one of the most common parasites that infects cats, it is more of a "puppy problem" than an adult one, and it is the most frequent non-bacteria cause of diarrhea. They also say that 30% of the canine population under one year old is infected while in kennels.

It is getting to be that time of year (spring) where many people will come into the store and mention their pet's diarrhea. Giardia is a VERY common reason for this.

Standard drug treatment

The information below was taken from www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov the article is called "the impact of giardia vaccination on a symptomatic giardia infections in dogs at a research facility".

Current treatments for canine *Giardia* infections include metronidazole (Flagyl) and fenbendazole. Metronidazole can cause gastro intestinal side effects and dizziness. It has a treatment success rate of approximately 67% in dogs. Fenbendazole has fewer side effects than metronidazole. Some cases of *Giardia* infected dogs have failed to respond to treatment with both metronidazole and fenbendazole. Albendazole has been shown to be effective in the treatment of *Giardia* in dogs but has been associated with bone marrow toxicosis and is no longer recommended. There is a giardia vaccine for dogs now.

Located in the Copperfield Corner Shopping Center

Tel: 726-0558

Address: 107 15566 McIvor Blvd SE

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Natural treatment

Grapefruit seed extract is very helpful in treating this and other parasites. For gastro intestinal disorders in pets use one drop of the concentrate per 10 lbs. of body weight. Up to 3-5 times a day when there is known infection. 1 tab/capsule is recommended for each 10lbs of body weight. Each capsule equals 10-15 drops of the liquid. The drops are VERY bitter. If it is not put in the food, it needs to be diluted!

Oil of Oregano/Oreganol (is the gel cap version) possesses deep penetrating powers and can readily penetrate the intestinal epithelium. A study done in Mexico where Giardia infestation is epidemic has shown that oregano was more effective in destroying giardia than Flagyl (standard drug TX) with a 90% kill rate. Each gel cap contains 6 drops of the liquid). You would use one or the other, not both of these together.

Goldenseal contains berberine, which withstands digestive acids, and finds it's way deep in to the digestive tract to work its magic.

Garlic may be helpful to add to the diet as well.

Probiotics/acidophilus can helps replace the friendly bacteria in the intestinal tract.

Slippery elm can help with diarrhea.

Written by Tamara Low

References:

Ingram, Dr. Cass. The Cure is in the Cupboard. Knowledge House, Illinois. 1997. (p 66-67)

Puotinin, C.J. The Encyclopedia of Natural Pet Care. Keats Publishing, Los Angeles, 2000.

Tilford, Mary L. Wulff-Tilford and Gregory L. Tilford. Herbs for Pets. Bow Tie Press, California. 1999. (p. 326)

For suggestions, books, supplements, and a large selection of healthy pet foods, grapefruit seed extract , slippery elm and Petzlife, please visit the Copperfield Tail Blazers.

The information in this article should in no way replace regular veterinary care from a qualified Holistic Veterinarian.