

Brucellosis in Dogs

What is Canine Brucellosis?

Canine Brucellosis is an infectious disease caused by the *Brucella Canis* bacteria. The disease is not considered to be endemic in the UK but true case numbers are unknown.

There is a growing concern regarding this disease due to the large number of dogs imported from Eastern European countries (especially Romania), where *Brucella Canis* is endemic. There have been increasing numbers of imported dogs which have tested positive in recent years. One concern is that these dogs often appear clinically well so it may not be detected straight away. We must remember that *Brucella Canis* is zoonotic, which means it can infect and cause disease in humans.



How can it be transmitted between dogs?

- Aborted material, birth fluids, placenta as it is shed for several weeks following birth
- Mating
- From mother to puppy in the womb or ingestion of milk
- Vaginal discharge when in season
- Semen

- Urine
- Blood

What are the clinical signs of Brucella Canis in the dog?

Worryingly, many dogs do not show clinical signs. These dogs can still be infectious and pass this disease onto other dogs and humans. Dogs that show no clinical signs but are infected can develop clinical signs later in life.

Clinical signs include:

- Abortion
- Failure for a bitch to conceive or male infertility
- Non-specific signs:
 - lethargy
 - fever
 - weight loss
 - back pain
 - stiffness
 - lameness
 - enlarged lymph nodes
 - eye disease

What are the risks to humans?

Dogs who are infected with Brucella pose a risk to owners and the veterinary team. As the dog may not be showing clinical signs this makes it harder to identify, therefore testing imported dogs is key even if they don't show symptoms. Testing for Brucella Canis is becoming the mainstay of controlling this disease. In people, symptoms of brucellosis may include fever, joint pain and fatigue. Brucella poses a greater risk to those who may be immunocompromised (e.g. undergoing chemotherapy treatment) or have underlying health conditions.

Testing

We recommend that any dog being imported from Romania or Eastern Europe is tested before they come to the UK.

If this has not been done then we can test for Brucella in the clinic but you must make us aware that your dog has been imported. The results usually take around 7-14 days to come back.



If testing is declined

We may not be able to offer the same treatment option if we do not know the *Brucella Canis* status of an imported dog.

Examples of these treatments include:

- Testing involving urine
- Pyometra surgery
- Caesarean section
- Mammary gland removal
- Assisting with tricky births including caesarians
- Neutering

What happens if my dog had a positive result?

We would need to report this to the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) to help them collect the data to create more up to date information.

Our recommendation may be euthanasia sadly, especially if you are pregnant, immunocompromised or have children under 5 years old in the house.

Options if euthanasia is declined:

- Refer you to the APHA website.

- Public Health England have advised to never walk positive dogs on public land and to keep them away from other dogs and humans.
- The dog will need to be barrier nursed/isolated if it is ever admitted into the hospital.
- We would be unable to provide some surgical and medical procedures due to the imposed risk on our staff.

To book in for your dog in for a health check or testing, please call us on 01423 228080 or visit www.clarohillvets.co.uk.