

Coccidia

If you own a dog, one or many, and you compete with them in any venue, at sometime or another your dog is bound to pick up Coccidia. Although dog shows and other events aren't the only place your dog can pick it up, (i.e. a boarding kennel) it is the most likely. And, unfortunately, once you have it on your property (it lives in the soil), you'll never be rid of it unless you burn the ground or move! But there is hope, as I have found out, that you can drastically reduce the number and severity of outbreaks. Coccidia is a one-celled parasitic protozoa that infects the intestinal tracts of dogs (and other animals). It is highly contagious, being spread through the feces of infected dogs, with a 13 day incubation period. It is detected by a routine fecal exam, often needing more than one test to confirm because of the cysts being shed intermittently. The first symptoms are soft, mucousy stools that have an odor similar to the smell of freshly cut alfalfa. The infected dog's eyes are often watery and the coat becomes dull. As damage to the mucous lining of the intestines progresses, a secondary bacterial infection sets in and the stools begin to smell foul and often contain large amounts of mucous and blood. Left untreated, coccidia can be fatal for young puppies.

The most effective treatment that I have found (by trial and error) is with the use of liquid Corid (Amprolium-9.6% Solution) or Albon Solution (liquid, NOT the tablets) at the rate of 1cc per 5# body weight, in the drinking water daily for 21 days! (not the 7 to 10 days normally recommended by the vet.) The reason being is that Coccidia runs a 21 day cycle and that is how long it takes the cells of the intestine to shed to the surface and allow the Corid (or Albon) to get to the coccidia. The negative effect of treating with Albon or Corid, is that it also destroys the beneficial intestinal bacteria. During and after treatment, it is a good idea to give a high potency probiotic supplement (with digestive enzymes) to help maintain a healthy digestive tract. All of my dogs get a probiotic supplement on their food daily.

It's important to pick up all fecal matter promptly and treat the yard and kennel areas often. Coccidia is NOT destroyed by bleach, contrary to popular belief. It has been shown to be destroyed by Ammonia, and the "old fashioned" Lysol concentrate. (1 part Ammonia or Lysol to 10 parts of water.) I personally treat my yard bi-weekly and cement kennel area weekly, alternating with the diluted solutions of Ammonia, Lysol, or Bleach (I still use this as a parvo-cide). I have never killed the grass in the yard by doing this. Before treating the yard, my dogs were continually re-infecting themselves every time they used the yard.

Do not use plastic food or water dishes as coccidia can stay in the crevices. Use stainless steel dishes and clean with a mild ammonia solution regularly.

By following this protocol, I have not had any more full blown outbreaks. Occasionally, when one dog passes a mucousy stool, I will treat everyone with Tylan Soluble Powder (Tylosin Tartrate) in the water, and it clears it up immediately without it spreading to the others. Tylan is great to have on hand to treat many intestinal infections. It is safe (recommended by a vet) to treat nursing mothers, puppies, and adults. The dosage is 1 tsp. per 5 gallons of water (or 1/4 tsp. per 1 gal.) given as the only source of drinking water for 3 days.

Source for Probiotics:

http://www.nzymes.com/product_bacpak_plus_fortified.htm

Source for Corid , Albon & Tylan:

<http://revivalanimal.com/>

<http://www.kvvet.com/>

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