



# Regional Club Liaison Newsletter

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## Possible Poison

### Allium Species

Allium is the plant species that contains onions, garlic, scallions, chives, and leeks. These can cause serious problems in dogs and cats. They contain an organosulfide compound. Plant injury (think chewing) converts the organosulfides into organosulfur compounds which in turn cause toxicosis because of ready absorption through the GI tract in pets. Cooking does not reduce the potential toxic effects.

One toxic effect is the breakdown of red blood cells which causes anemia. Severe anemia can reduce the oxygen carrying capacity of the blood and result in various signs (pale, weak). Another side effect is strong heart and smooth muscle relaxation. That in turn causes widening of blood arterioles and lower blood pressure. Garlic can cause GI pain and diarrhea.

Ingestion may be of the plant (or bulb) itself, juices, powdered preparations, and foods containing extracts. Another source of ingestion is food flavored with onion, such as baby food which some might give an already sick dog to encourage eating.

I found several references that ingestion of 0.5% of body weight will cause toxic signs, although some animals will experience toxicity at lower dosages.

If your dog is 50 lbs, 0.5% of body weight would be  $50 \times 0.05 = 2.5$  lbs of onion. That sounds like an unlikely amount for a dog such as a Bearded Collie to consume. Remember that the other sources, such as powdered extract, would be much more concentrated.

Dogs with heritable high erythrocyte reduced glutathione and potassium concentrations are more susceptible to the hematologic effects of onions. Japanese breeds are more prone to this trait.

Signs usually appear within a 24-hour period of consumption, but may occur after several days. Pets seem depressed, have shortness of breath, a rapid heart beat, jaundice, hemoglobinuria (red colored urine), seem weak and show intolerance to exercise and to cold. They may go off their food, have abdominal pain, diarrhea and their breath may smell of onion or garlic.

Treatment consists of hospitalization, and IV fluids, and transfusion if severe anemia is present. Survival depends on making the correct diagnosis quickly and then providing the necessary supportive care.

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This newsletter may be copied for distribution to your regional club members.

### Tick Disease (Ehrlichiosis) Case Followup

Pumpkin's hospital stay was 5 days for IV fluids, oral doxycycline, frequent lab work, several abdominal ultrasounds, and careful observation. Within 3 days she was able to walk and even trotted a couple of steps; she gave a couple of weak kisses and was willing to walk outside briefly. By 5 days, she was more vigorous, less jaundiced and pale, able to trot out for a good walk, and obviously happy to visit with me and her herding mate—Miss Rusty.

Once home, she mostly slept but was interested enough to want to go on the morning cow rounds. It took her several more days (nine to be exact) to have any interest in sniffing food and to begin eating.

Now several months after the illness Pumpkin has regained her weight, eats with gusto, and participates in her regular farm activities. We're so happy to have her bark back.

### Tidbits

There have been interesting discussions on BDL (a yahoo group in case you are not on the group but interested—it is BeardieList).

**Loss of Hair** (and weight gain). Several owners noted this had happened to their Beardies and that hypothyroidism had been diagnosed. Each dog gradually improved once thyroid replacement was started. If weight gain and lethargy are associated with hypothyroidism, you will probably have noted some other very subtle changes, too. Those could include behavioral change, change in hair quality, less activity, and sleeping more. So if your Beardie has loss of hair (with or without other signs), please ask your veterinarian to consider a complete thyroid panel among the evaluations.

### Senior Exams.

Linda Aronson, DVM, wrote the following (reproduced with permission). A good physical exam looks at all the body systems, getting both a history from the owner and a good hands on exam of the dog.

Mentation - normal would be bright, alert, responsive.  
Heart rate, respiratory rate, temperature. Physical exam, I start at the head and work back, examine inside the mouth, look for obvious dental problems and examine tongue and gums, look for lumps and swellings inside and out, view eyes and ears with ophthalmoscope/otoscope.

Palpate neck and throat, auscultate heart and lungs, continue examination of body for abnormal skin, coat conditions, overly long claws, check pads, examine abdominal organs for signs of enlargement, palpate for enlarged lymph nodes, on male dog do prostate exam, check external reproductive organs. Ask about eating, drinking, urination, defecation, vomiting. The dog should be examined for signs of musculoskeletal problems - muscle wasting, pain in any or all joints, and a basic neurological exam for cranial and peripherical nerve function, proprioception etc.

After that, blood should be drawn for a CBC profile, urine taken by cystocentesis for urinalysis, +/- fecal exam. In the northeast I would run a snap 4Dx for heartworm, Lyme, E.canis and A. phagocytophilum. Beyond that further testing and exam would be based on any abnormalities or changes noted either by me or the dog's owner. (NOTE from E Sell—I would also want to see the vet running a snap 4Dx here in the SE, given my recent experience with ticks and Ehrlichiosis).

Another person reminded the list that weight and body condition score are important. Actually they ought to be recorded and discussed at each vet visit, no matter the age.

### Oral Care and Teeth Cleaning.

**Why is dental care important?** Think of your own dental care—do you miss brushing your teeth daily or miss your scheduled routine dental checkups? If you do, you are inviting future problems down the road from periodontal disease. Advanced periodontal disease can cause pain and teeth loss with resulting need for dentures and all that implies, as well as the possibility of developing infection elsewhere from the bacteria associated with gum disease.

The same applies to your dog (or cat) - avoiding periodontal disease is important to an animal's oral and overall health. Signs of periodontal disease include brownish colored teeth; swollen, red, or bleeding gums; persistent bad breath; loose teeth or loss of teeth; pus between the gums and teeth; broken teeth and any unusual growth in the mouth. Reluctance to eat, play with chew toys, or drink cold water are warning signs of periodontal or gum disease.

**What happens in development of periodontal disease?** "Periodontal disease is an infection of the tissue surrounding the teeth that takes hold in progressive stages. It starts out as a bacterial film called plaque. The bacteria attach to the teeth. When the bacteria die they can be calcified by calcium in sa-

liva. This forms a hard, rough substance called tartar or calculus which allows more plaque to accumulate. Initially, plaque is soft and brushing or chewing hard food and toys can dislodge it. If left to spread, plaque can lead to gingivitis, an inflammation of the gums, causing them to become red and swollen and to bleed easily. As plaque and calculus develop below the gum line, professional cleaning will be needed to help manage it. If the plaque and tartar buildup continues unchecked, infection can form around the root of the tooth.” (Taken directly from link 1 under dental care).

Who is responsible for your dog’s dental care? Both your veterinarian and yourself. The owner can examine the mouth regularly and provide routine dental care (tooth brushing). Your veterinarian’s responsibility include regular oral examination and dental cleaning when indicated.

Periodontal disease can be painful for the one who has it!

#### Myths.

1. Veterinarians do dental care to boost their bottom line.
2. Adequate dental care can be done without at least light anesthesia.
3. Raw diet will prevent periodontal disease. It appears to help some dogs but not all. Certainly chewing on hard bones can help dislodge plaque, but you’re not likely to find a veterinarian who would recommend this approach—they are worried about legal issues if some complication arises from a dog being given a hard bone upon their recommendation.

American Veterinary Dental College (AVDC). This organization has a good web site, listing signs of periodontal disease and providing a list of dental veterinary specialists by state.

The Veterinary Oral Health Council (VOHC) has set standards for chew products designed to reduce plaque and tartar. The following from the VOHC web site ([www.vohc.org](http://www.vohc.org)): “VOHC is not a regulatory agency. Submission of results of clinical trials to VOHC on behalf of a product is voluntary. If the data submitted demonstrate the required dental efficacy, the VOHC Seal of Acceptance is awarded to the product. As part of the submission, VOHC requires assurance by the company that a product awarded the VOHC Seal is safe and meets all applicable regulatory requirements, and requires the company to inform VOHC of any problems with the product following issuance of the VOHC Seal. VOHC will take action if FDA or other appropriate

regulatory authority finds fault with a class of products or a specific product that is included in the VOHC Accepted list. “ Among products that have the VOHC seal or approval are several foods and treats. See the web site for a list.



### **Dry Dog Food Associated With *Salmonella***

Although a rare occurrence, there was an outbreak of *Salmonella* infection between January 1 2006 and December 31, 2007. The *Salmonella* was serotype Schwarzengrund (this is a different strain from the current one involving as yet unidentified source(s) such as tomato, jalapeno, or other salsa ingredients—St. Paul).

The *Salmonella* Schwarzengrund outbreak affected at least 70 people in 19 states according to CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention). No pets were affected although fecal specimens from dogs who ate the dog food were positive for the same strain of *Salmonella* in two household. Most cases were in Pennsylvania (29), New York (9), and Ohio (7). Ages of persons affected was available for 61; the median age was 3 years and 39% were 1 year or younger. Of 45 people whose hospitalization status is known, 11 were hospitalized. No deaths were reported.

Investigation traced the source of the outbreak to a plant that produced 25 brands of dry pet food. The manufacturer recalled 50-pound bags of one brand of dry dog food (Select Red Flannel Large Breed Adult Formula sold in 2 stores in PA—3 bags were sold and only 1 was unaccounted for) and 5 lb bags of another dry dog food (Krasdale Gravy Dry Dog Food). The plant was closed for four months for cleaning and disinfecting.

Human *Salmonella* infection has been associated with pet treats but this was the first time that dry dog food was a culprit. The CDC warned that contaminated dry pet food might still be in homes because not all contaminated food had been recovered.

Most people infected with *Salmonella* develop fever, diarrhea (some will have bloody diarrhea—that occurred in 32% of these cases), and abdominal cramps 12–72 hours after exposure. Illness usually lasts 4–7 days, and most people recover without treatment. Infants, the elderly, and immune compromised persons are thought to be at greatest risk of severe illness.

Recommendations include people washing their hands for at least 20 seconds in warm, soapy water after handling dry pet foods. In addition, infants should be kept away from pet feeding areas, and children younger than 5 years should not be allowed to touch or eat pet food.

Source: American Academy of Pediatric News, July 2008. Carla Kemp, Senior Editor.

**Did You Know** that several human vaccines are used routinely at both ends of the age spectrum (infancy and over 60 years)? The reason behind the approval and use for the older person is that immunization of younger individuals has dramatically impacted the diseases (reduced or eliminated) to which older persons were exposed in their earlier years. The vaccines available for older persons include varicella-zoster virus (VZV) vaccine, influenza, and TDP (tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis).

### Links

Allium Species.

[http://www.edmondsun.com/features/local\\_story\\_205114633.html?keyword=secondarystory](http://www.edmondsun.com/features/local_story_205114633.html?keyword=secondarystory)

<http://www.vetmedpub.com/vetmed/article/articleDetail.jsp?id=174478>

Dental Care.

[http://www.healthypet.com/library\\_view.aspx?ID=142](http://www.healthypet.com/library_view.aspx?ID=142)

Brushing Teeth. [http://www.healthypet.com/library\\_view.aspx?ID=135&sid=1](http://www.healthypet.com/library_view.aspx?ID=135&sid=1)

<http://www.peteducation.com/article.cfm?articleid=517>

ADVC. <http://www.avdc.org/>

Dry Dog Food Associated with Human *Salmonella* Outbreak.

[Www.cdc.gov/salmonella/schwarzengrund.html](http://www.cdc.gov/salmonella/schwarzengrund.html)

## BeaCon's Web Site

### Home Page

[www.beaconforhealth.org](http://www.beaconforhealth.org)

### Log in for Open Health Registry

[www.beaconforhealth.org/sqlweb](http://www.beaconforhealth.org/sqlweb)

### New Links

- "Lab Tests" on BeaCon's home page. Two articles on lab tests—one on blood tests and one on urinalysis.
- A House Divided: Autoimmune Disease. By CA Sharp. <http://www.xs4all.nl/~gvdt57/usa/immune2.html>
- BeaCon Year 7 Open Health Registry Report. Go to the home page and select the link for either a Word or PDF formatted document.

### Addison's Research Project at UC Davis

- Request cheek swab kit for submitting your Beardie's DNA—  
<http://cgap.ucdavis.edu/addison's.htm>
- Update your Beardie's health yearly—<http://cgap.ucdavis.edu/healthupdateform.htm>

### **Addison's Study—IMPORTANT**

If you joined the Addison's study in the first several years when it was at U Oregon (98-99), you submitted a blood sample on your Beardie. The current researcher, Dr. Oberbauer at UCDavis, need to confirm health status on healthy and Addisonian dogs with owners. This is very important for moving ahead with study of genetic links using the blood sample material. **Contact the update site listed in the box above ASAP.**

### **SLO**

### **Symmetrical Lupoid Onychodystrophy**

BeaCon will be gathering information about SLO later this summer with an eye to possible future research.

If you have a Beardie with SLO please enter him/her in the open health registry and contact Cindy Alspaugh ([stonebaybeardies@yahoo.com](mailto:stonebaybeardies@yahoo.com)).