

How is brucellosis spread?

Dog-to-dog spread of brucellosis occurs most often through breeding and by contact with vaginal discharges, semen, birthing fluids, and urine. Contact with an infected dog's blood, milk, saliva, and feces are less common sources of infection.

Brucellosis can spread from dogs to people through contact with an infected dog's birthing fluids and vaginal discharge or infected puppies. This is why dog breeders and veterinarians are at higher risk. Rarely, brucellosis can be spread from family pets to people through contact with urine, saliva, and other bodily fluids from infected dogs.

What are the symptoms?

In female dogs, the most common symptoms are aborted pregnancies, stillbirth, and inability to become pregnant. In males, the primary symptom is the inability to sire puppies. Both sexes may have swollen lymph glands, eye disease, and infections of the spine. However, most infected dogs appear normal and show no symptoms except for infertility. Female dogs can deliver healthy-appearing, but infected puppies.

Brucellosis in people normally causes a fever, headache, swollen lymph glands, night sweats, joint and muscle aches, fatigue, weight loss, and swollen liver and/or spleen. Some people may not have any symptoms.

For more information, contact:
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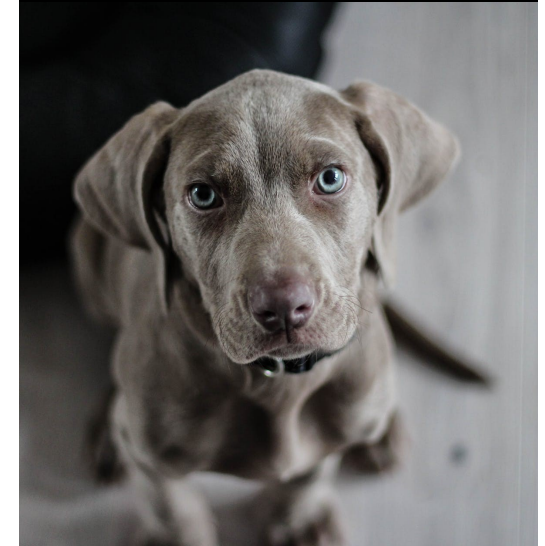
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Canine Brucellosis: Information for Breeding Kennels



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What is canine brucellosis?

Canine brucellosis is a disease found in dogs caused by a type of bacteria called *Brucella canis*. Infected dogs can also spread the disease to people.



Who gets brucellosis?

Dogs and people can become infected with brucellosis.

Dogs in breeding programs are at higher risk of having brucellosis due to increased reproductive contact. Infected puppies can be born to apparently healthy moms.

In people, dog breeders and veterinarians are most at risk of infection because of their work with birthing puppies (whelping). People can also get brucellosis from their family pet, but this is much less common.

How do you test for brucellosis?

Testing for brucellosis can be very difficult, and not all infected dogs will test positive. Breeding animals should come from kennels without a history of brucellosis or reproductive losses. Isolating and testing dogs before they enter a kennel may identify some infected dogs, however, common tests may fail to identify half or more of infected dogs.



If one dog tests positive in a breeding kennel, it can be very difficult to determine which other dogs in the kennel have been infected even with testing. Some dogs may test negative on blood tests due to early infection or because the bacteria is in other parts of the body. Often, all dogs in the kennel are considered infected due to the risk to other dogs and people.

What can breeding kennels do to reduce risk of canine brucellosis?

All dogs purchased for breeding or being sold from a breeding kennel should be inspected by a licensed veterinarian. By law, all dogs traveling across state lines must have a valid health certificate (certificate of veterinary inspection). Work with your veterinarian to develop a preventive program to reduce the risk of brucellosis and other diseases from entering your kennel. Plans should include:

Biosecurity – Limit movement of people and dogs into and out of the kennel. Ensure that dogs entering the facility are apparently healthy and come from disease-free kennels.

Cleaning and Disinfection - The bacteria which causes brucellosis can survive for months in dirty environments, but is readily killed by common disinfectants when applied to clean surfaces.

Monitoring – Monitor all dogs daily for signs of disease and promptly isolate any that are sick. Ill dogs should not have contact with other dogs, including using the same outdoor spaces unless cleaned and disinfected after use. Any items such as food bowls, beds, and leashes should not be used for healthy dogs until thoroughly disinfected.

Can brucellosis be treated?

Brucellosis is very difficult to treat and relapses are common. Treatment is typically not attempted for dogs in breeding kennels because even the best treatments may fail, are expensive, and may require medication and follow-up testing for months. Some dogs remain test positive for two years or more even with treatment and may need to be retreated multiple times. Euthanasia of breeding dogs should be considered in infected kennels.