

## Update on Hemorrhagic Gastroenteritis and Watery Diarrhea in Dogs

(2/13/09)

As of 2/12/09, veterinarians at 13 veterinary practices have reported 99 cases of either bloody or watery diarrhea in dogs since January 1, 2009. Of these cases, 82 also had vomiting. Half of the cases recover within five days and half take longer to recover or have a waxing and waning disease course. At least 29 cases required intravenous fluid treatment, while others required less intensive care. Most cases were treated by veterinarians with antibiotics and anti-nausea or anti-vomiting drugs.

Los Angeles County has an estimated 1.9 million dogs, so this outbreak is affecting a very small proportion of the population.

Outbreaks of bloody diarrhea in dogs were reported in four out of the five past winters in Los Angeles County, suggesting that seasonality may play a role. There is NO evidence thus far to link this to the peanut-butter paste Salmonella outbreak. Thus far, salmonella cultures have been reported on 12 dogs and all were negative. Tests for several other infectious agents are also being performed, and have not yet revealed a clear answer. There is no evidence that any food contamination is playing a role, because the dogs have all been eating a wide variety of foods.

In the majority of cases (89.5%), no other pet in the house was reported to have the same illness, so this condition does not appear to spread easily from dog to dog. This condition also does NOT appear to spread from dogs to people.

So far, most cases are being reported from the San Fernando Valley area, with sporadic cases being reported from around the county. Veterinarians are encouraged to continue reporting in order to help better track patterns that may reveal a cause.

