



## Home Care for the Dog with Vomiting and Diarrhea

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[Vomiting](#) and diarrhea are the most common symptoms seen in dogs. They can occur alone or together. It can be a very minor self-limiting problem or a very significant major problem.

Below are some common questions pet owners ask when their dog has vomiting and [diarrhea](#). The focus of this article will be on how you can care for these problems at home.

### What is vomiting and diarrhea?

Vomiting is the act of expelling contents from the stomach through the mouth. Diarrhea is the act of having abnormally loose or liquid stools. This can also be associated with an increased frequency of bowel movements. Some dogs will have a large amount of liquid or abnormally loose stools once and others will have semi-formed stools frequently with straining.

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### What causes vomiting and diarrhea?

Vomiting and diarrhea can be caused by a variety of problems including eating too fast, eating too much, eating something that is not digestible, changes in the dog's food, eating spoiled food or garbage, infectious agents (including bacterial, viruses or parasites), as well as systemic problems such as cancer, [diabetes](#), pancreatitis, kidney disease or liver disease. For a full list of possible causes – go to: [Gastroenteritis in Dogs](#).

Vomiting and diarrhea can affect your dog by causing extreme fluid loss, which leads to dehydration, electrolyte disturbances and/or acid-base imbalances.

A common question that pet owners often ask is, "What can I do at home?"

### Home treatment of vomiting and diarrhea

Specific treatments of vomiting are dependent on the cause. Here is the general approach to treating vomiting and diarrhea:

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- If your pet vomits once and/or has a small amount of diarrhea then eats normally with no further vomiting, has a normal bowel movement and is acting playful, then the problem may resolve on its own.
- If you discover any predisposing cause such as exposure to trash, change in [diet](#) or plants your dog may be eating, always eliminate that cause.
- If your dog vomits several times, has diarrhea and you cannot take your dog to your veterinarian (which is recommended), then you may try the following:

- Do not give any medications without consulting your veterinarian. Some medications can be toxic.

- Dealing with both vomiting and diarrhea can be difficult. Often with Vomiting we hold food for 2 to 4 hours – with Diarrhea sometimes is it longer – even 24 hours. These are general guidelines trying to treat both conditions. If your dog is acting sick, lethargic or the vomiting and/or diarrhea continues – PLEASE see your veterinarian.

- Withhold food and [water](#) for four to six hours. Oftentimes, the stomach lining may be very irritated. Some dogs will want to eat and continue vomiting. Give the stomach "time to rest" for a few hours.

- If your pet has not vomited by the end of this time, offer small amounts of water (a few tablespoons at a time). Continue to offer small amounts of water ever 20 minutes or so until your pet is hydrated. Don't allow your dog to over [drink](#) as this may lead to vomiting.

- If there has been no vomiting after the small increments of water are offered, then you may gradually offer a bland diet.

- Small frequent feedings of a bland digestible diet such as Hill's Prescription Diet i/d, Iams Recovery Diet, Provision EN or Waltham Low Fat, are usually recommended. You can make a homemade diet of boiled rice or potatoes (as the carbohydrate source) and lean hamburger, skinless chicken or low-fat cottage cheese (as the protein source), Feed small amounts at a time. Don't over feed as your dog may eat the entire bowl and vomit. Feed a meatball size portion and if there is no vomiting, offer a small amount more about 1 hour later. Give small amounts frequently – every 3 to 4 hours – for the first day. You can gradually increase the amount and decrease the frequency as your dog tolerates.

- Many [veterinarians](#) recommend Pepcid AC® (generic name is Famotidine) to decrease [stomach acid](#). This helps many pets. The dosage most commonly used is 0.25 to 0.5 mg per pound (0.5 to 1.0 mg/kg) every 12 to 24 hours. A 20-pound dog should get about 5 to 10 mg (total dose) once to twice daily. This is an oral medication, which can be found at most pharmacies in the antacid section. Pepcid (Famotidine) does not require a prescription. It is often used for 3 to 5 days.

- Some veterinarians recommend Pepto-Bismol or Kaopectate® (for dogs only!). The active ingredients are generally subsalicylate and Bismuth. Two tablespoons of Pepto-Bismol contain almost as much salicylate as one aspirin tablet (which is toxic to cats). Do NOT give cats Pepto-Bismol or Kaopectate! The subsalicylate, an aspirin-like compound, can decrease diarrhea caused by intestinal infections. The bismuth agent is a chalk-like compound designed to coat the lining of the stomach and intestines. This helps some pets with diarrhea. The typical daily dose administered to dogs amounts to approximately 2 teaspoons (10 ml total) per 10-pounds, ideally split between two to four doses. This be found at most pharmacies and does not require a prescription. It is often used for 1 to 2 days. DO NOT USE IN CATS.

- Feed a bland diet for 2 days.

- The return to regular dog food should be gradual over a period of one to two days. At first, mix in a little of your dog's food into the bland diet. Feed that for one meal. Then feed a 50/50 mix for one meal. Then feed ¾ dog food and ¼ bland diet for a meal – then feed your dog's regular food.

- Leash-walk your pet to allow observation of bowel movements, observe for normal urinations and note any additional vomiting that may otherwise occur without your knowledge.

- Administer only prescribed medications.

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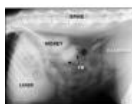
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