

My Dog Has Tummy Trouble

Food allergies, stomach parasites, or an ulcer may cause regular vomiting.

Jon Geller, DVM

Q. We have an 11-month-old Dandie Dinmont Terrier. She seems prone to throwing up bile on the average of once a week but is just fine afterward and eats her food with no problem.

We feed her special food for dogs with sensitive stomachs and have had her to the vet. They did some berium testing when she was younger and found nothing.

Any information would be helpful. She does like to pick things up outside, but we watch her very carefully.

A. Intermittent vomiting can be very frustrating (and inconvenient) for dog owners, but if it persists there usually is an underlying cause. Your veterinarian can usually rule out the more common causes of vomiting by doing routine blood tests and X-rays. If those tests are normal, it is time to start looking for other more obscure causes of vomiting.

If your dog has a food allergy, you may have to try different custom diets, such as duck and potato, or turkey and rice (I don't know about you, but I am getting a little hungry). These are available commercially, but you might also consider a homemade diet. Your veterinarian can give you more info on how to do this. If these diets are effective, you should notice a difference within two weeks.

The next level of testing would involve endoscopy, in which a flexible tube with a light and camera is passed down through your dog's stomach and intestines. This is fairly costly and involves general anesthesia, but is a very safe procedure. This could diagnose problems like stomach parasites and ulcers, both of which can cause vomiting. Your veterinarian can also get some biopsy samples during endoscopy, which might show an abnormal intestinal wall.

It is very possible your dog just has a sensitive stomach, in which case you may expect occasional vomiting. Hopefully additional food trials and possibly endoscopy can help ensure there is no serious underlying problem.

Best, Jon Geller, DVM

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