Acute Hemorrhagic Diarrhea Syndrome (AHDS)

Acute Hemorrhagic Diarrhea Syndrome (AHDS) is characterized by a sudden bloody diarrhea due to sloughing of the intestinal wall. All dogs can be affected, however, middle aged toy breeds (e.g. Miniature Poodles, Miniature Schnauzers, Yorkshire Terriers) seem to be predisposed.

Currently, the cause of AHDS is unknown (idiopathic). It may be related to dietary indiscretion (ingesting non-food items or different foods), immune mediated, toxins, pancreatitis, parasitic infections, bacterial infections, viral infections, stomach/intestinal ulcers, clotting disorders.

Typical Clinical Signs:

- Vomiting
- Bloody diarrhea – very often bright red
- Lethargy
- Painful abdomen
- Decreased appetite
- Fever
- Dehydration

Treatment:

Aggressive fluid therapy:

One of the main reasons of hospitalization of dogs with AHDS is the need for supportive treatment with intravenous fluid therapy being essential to their treatment. Fluids are used to replace any fluid loss in the diarrhea, any dehydration present and correct any electrolyte imbalances that can arise due to diarrhea/vomiting.

Antibiotics:

Antibiotics may be warranted if the disease is very severe and/or the dog is septic. Antibiotics are usually delivered intravenously.

Feeding:

Dogs with AHDS should be fasted for 12-24 hours and subsequently offered small quantities of easily digestible food frequently.

Other Treatments:

- Anti-vomiting/Anti-nausea medications
- Gastric antacids

- Probiotics

Conclusion:

Dogs with AHDS typically have a good outcome if symptomatic treatment is started early. Since the cause is unknown, it is difficult to advise on how to prevent AHDS. However, we highly suggest feeding high quality commercial diets and not feeding treats your dog is not accustomed to. Other suggestions would be to use regular parasite prevention (such as routine intestinal dewormers) and providing a low stress environment would also be helpful.

Take care,

Dr Vanessa