

Inflammatory Bowel Disease in German Shepherd dogs

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Inflammatory Bowel disease is considered to be the most common cause of vomiting and diarrhoea in dogs. It is a chronic recurrent disease that can occur anywhere in the gastro-intestinal tract, with clinical signs varying depending on the location. The cause of canine inflammatory bowel disease is currently unknown but studies have shown that it is most likely immune-mediated with immunologic, environmental and genetic factors playing a role in disease development.

The only way to make a definitive diagnosis of inflammatory bowel disease is by histopathology of intestinal biopsies. This disease reduces the dogs' quality of life and can be very difficult to manage. It is not curable, and long-term treatment is required to keep these dogs comfortable.



Although Inflammatory Bowel disease can occur in any canine breed it is more prevalent in some breeds such as the German Shepherd dog (GSD). This suggests that a genetic predisposition exists in this breed which increases their susceptibility to Inflammatory Bowel Disease.

This study aims to collect large numbers of residual samples from German Shepherd dogs suffering from inflammatory bowel disease and from healthy German Shepherd dogs. The samples will be used for genetic analysis to investigate the causes of this disease. The collective results from a large number of dogs are expected to add important knowledge and understanding of this disease and help find strategies for its prevention, early diagnosis and treatment.

Studying this disease in the dogs may also help research in inflammatory bowel disease (Crohn's disease and Ulcerative colitis) in people.

How you can help:

- If you own a German Shepherd dog **4 years of age or older, who does not suffer from chronic vomiting or diarrhoea**, you can help by contacting the Clinical Investigations Centre for an information and sampling pack, and by asking your vet to collect any surplus blood for the study next time your dog needs a blood sample taken.

What the study involves:

The study requires blood samples for genetic analysis from dogs diagnosed as suffering from Inflammatory Bowel disease, but **also from healthy German Shepherd dogs NOT suffering from chronic diarrhoea**. The blood sample for the study can be obtained at any time when a blood sample is taken or a catheter is placed into a vein for any clinical reason. Some life style and health information from affected and unaffected dogs will also need to be collected.

Note: Your personal data will be strictly confidential. If results of the study are published, you and your dog's details will not be disclosed.

