



Canine Brucellosis – Imported dogs and the need for testing

Canine Brucellosis is an infectious disease caused by the bacteria *Brucella canis*. It is a disease that can be transmitted to humans from infected dogs and can cause serious illness and occasionally be fatal. Although currently very rare in the UK, cases are rising due to increasing numbers of imported dogs, some of which are infected. There is a significant level of disease in many countries of Eastern and Southern Europe as well as other parts of the world. There are also cases now of transmission between dogs in the UK. You may have seen recently in the media, the report of a very sad situation where an infected imported dog spread the disease to the lady who had rehomed it and all her other dogs. The lady became very ill and was hospitalised, and all the dogs had to be euthanased.

Canine Brucellosis is mainly a reproductive disease (a STD for dogs), and is generally transmitted through mating, from mother to pup in the uterus or suckling, from vaginal discharges when a bitch is in heat or giving birth, from urine and blood. Dogs that are neutered present a lower risk of transmitting the disease, but the risk is still present. If you plan to breed your dog, it is very important that you make sure the dog they are to be mated with has no risk of previous exposure to Brucellosis (has it come from abroad or been mated with other dogs that have been imported?).



Unfortunately, it is not recommended to treat an infected dog, and the only way to remove the risk of transmission is euthanasia. Even very long courses of combinations of antibiotics are often not successful in curing infection, and the dog remains a risk to other dogs and humans. It is required by law to report any *Brucella canis* positive cases to the APHA (Animal and Plant Health Agency).

Infected dogs pose a risk to other dogs in the UK, their owner's family, and anyone else they come into contact with. People who have a compromised immune system, pregnant women and young children are at higher risk of severe infection. There is a significant risk to veterinary staff during surgery, treatment and care of infected dogs. We, along with most other Veterinary Practices, are now putting measures in place to avoid risk to our staff from exposure to *Brucella canis*.

It is very important if you are getting a dog from abroad, especially a rescue dog or one that has or may have bred before, that it is tested for Brucellosis. No test is 100% accurate, but the tests recommended are serology tests for antibodies – SAT and RSA tests, carried out by the APHA. Antibodies are usually produced within 2 weeks of infection but may take up to 3 months. Therefore, to be as sure as possible that the dog is not infected, it should have a negative Brucellosis blood test before leaving the country of origin, and then



a blood test should be taken 3 months after the dog could last have been in contact with an infected dog or infectious material.

Our new protocol is that all newly registered imported dogs must have a negative Brucellosis test 3 months after entering the UK. All imported dogs that are to undergo non-emergency surgical procedures (especially neutering) MUST have a negative Brucellosis test result before it will be undertaken.

Please call and speak to one of our Vets if you have any questions about this. There is additional information on the situation on the BVA

website: <https://www.bva.co.uk/news-and-blog/news-article/bva-calls-for-extra-vigilance-and-stricter-pet-import-measures-after-first-confirmed-dog-to-human-case-of-brucella-canis-in-the-uk>.

New Faces

Erica Hurst RVN

Erica joined Castle Vets in August 2022 as our Head Nurse for maternity cover. She qualified in 2008 at a large, small animal practice in Reading. In 2009 she moved back home to Cornwall where she spent 13 years at a mixed practice that became a small animal only practice in Liskeard. She enjoys all aspects of veterinary nursing but has a keen interest in medicine, imaging, and all things cats! In her spare time, she loves walking and wild camping.



Howard Johnson BVSc MRCVS

Howard graduated from the University of Bristol in 2017 and has worked as a small animal vet in the UK and New Zealand since then. He joined Castle Vets in August after moving to Cornwall in June 2022 with his girlfriend to enjoy the outdoor lifestyle and get better at surfing! Outside of work he enjoys cooking, playing football, hiking, surfing, and skiing.



Kim Thomas (Kennel Assistant)

Kim joined the Castle Vets team in August 2022 as our new kennel assistant, a role which involves supporting our nursing team as they care for your pets. Kim loves spending time with her two dogs, Cleo and Luna, when she is not working.



Pam Bates (Kennel Assistant)

Pam joined the team at Castle Vets in August 2022. She lives with her two fluffy boys, Snooky and Crypto. In her spare time, she enjoys playing and walking with them and their buddies. Pam moved to Cornwall 6 years ago after a short time travelling around Asia, volunteering at various animal rescues. Animal welfare is a huge passion, and Pam hopes to study veterinary nursing in the near future.



Josie Bickley (Dispensary Technician)

Josie started at Castle Vets in August 2022 after graduating from college in June. In her spare time, she competes with her horse Freddie as a member of the West Devon Riding Club. She also loves to cook, draw and spend time with her dog Holly.



Karen Daniel (Senior Accounts Assistant)

Karen joined the team at Castle Vets in July 2022. She has recently relocated to the area and likes nothing more than exploring the countryside. She is also a massive Southampton football supporter and a recent follower of the Cornish All Blacks.



Sue Pitman (Accounts Assistant)

Sue joined Castle Vets in July 2022 as our Accounts Assistant. In her spare time, Sue enjoys hiking on the moors with her husband and rescue spaniel Hendrix, sometimes wild camping along the way. She also tries to get away in the UK as often as possible in their self-built campervan. Gardening, DIY and crafts are also on her list of hobbies to keep her busy.

