

Trouble Shooting for Fostering Dogs and Pups

A healthy puppy has bright eyes, a nice coat, and a plump belly. Younger puppies are content to sleep between feedings. As they approach 8 weeks they begin to spend more time playing. Unfortunately, puppies do become ill and sometimes die while being fostered, so it is important to take steps to prevent disease and treat it appropriately as soon as it appears.

Abnormal signs to watch for in a puppy:

Continuous diarrhea

Continuous vomiting

Constant crying

Reduced nursing

Reduced activity

Runny nose, sneezing or coughing

Hair loss

Bleeding of any kind: nose, urine, stool

Any trauma: hit by car, dropped, limping, stepped on, unconscious

If you have a sick puppy, you should report any symptoms to the foster coordinator. She can triage the issue over the phone or e-mail and have you bring in the foster(s) to be seen by the shelter vet staff if needed.

Do not take foster pets to your personal vet or to an emergency clinic unless specifically instructed to do so by the foster coordinator. Any vet bills you incur for your fosters at a personal vet clinic CANNOT be reimbursed.

Specific disease conditions in puppies:

Diarrhea

Diarrhea is common in puppies and can be caused by parasites, viruses, bacteria, food changes, stress, overfeeding, and other causes. If the diarrhea is mild and the puppy is otherwise alert and playful, you can try giving it less food but more often and monitor closely. Also ensure that the puppy gets a lot of fluid as they are prone dehydration. If the diarrhea is severe, lasts more than 3 or 4 feedings, or contains blood or obvious parasites, you should call the Foster Coordinator ASAP.

Vomiting

If your puppy is vomiting, it is possible that the puppy is eating his meals too quickly. You should watch him when he eats and not allow him to eat too much too quickly. If your puppy vomits 2-3 times in a row, you should call the Foster Coordinator ASAP as this could be a sign of an infectious disease.

Fading puppies

Once in a while, one or more puppies in a litter that were healthy and vigorous at birth will begin to "fade" after a week or two of life. They will stop growing; lose weight, and stop nursing and crawling. They may cry continuously and lose the ability to stay upright. The mother dog may push them out of the nest, where they often chill and starve to death. Puppies fade very quickly - they will not last 48 hours without veterinary care - and many

will not recover even with intensive care. Often there is no clear cause for this condition - it has been linked to birth defects, environmental stress and infectious disease. Early veterinary treatment is imperative, but even with tube feeding, rehydration and monitoring, many, if not most, fading puppies will die. If the shelter vet feels the foster is suffering and chances of recovery are very small, the shelter vet may opt to humanely euthanize the foster(s).

Fleas

Fleas are insects that love to feed on puppies. Although each flea only consumes a small drop of blood, fleas commonly attack in large numbers and an infestation can literally lead to anemia and even death in young puppies. It is therefore essential that your home be free of fleas before bringing home a small puppy. Fosters leaving the shelter will have been treated for fleas.

Kennel cough

Kennel cough is an extremely contagious respiratory disease that is often seen in animal shelters. Puppies with kennel cough typically cough or sneeze, and have nasal discharge. Kennel cough is often difficult for puppies to overcome, any puppy that is coughing or sneezing repeatedly, or has nasal and/or eye discharge requires veterinary attention. Report issues to the Foster Coordinator so an vet visit at TLAC can be arranged.

Ringworm

Ringworm is actually caused by a fungus, related to athlete's foot. On people and dogs, ringworm is most often shaped in a regular ring. The dog's fur will often fall out, leaving a round bare spot with a visible ring. Ringworm causes little distress and is not an emergency, but it **is contagious to cats, dogs, and people**. If you or your pets contract ringworm, you will need to seek treatment from your doctor and veterinarian (respectively). Everything the puppies touched while in your home will need to be disinfected with a bleach solution (at least 1 part bleach to 10 parts water, equivalent to 1+1/2 cup of bleach per gallon of water) or steam cleaned, it is recommended to repeat cleaning as ringworm spores are very hardy and can easily spread among other dogs and re-infect their hosts. If you have fostered a litter with ringworm, you should thoroughly clean and disinfect the area they were kept in and if you decide to foster another litter it is recommended to keep them in a different room than the ringworm infected litter.

Treatment

If your foster is diagnosed with an illness at the shelter, you will be provided with a "Treatment Sheet" indicating what illness the foster is being treated for and what medications or treatments the foster needs. If you have any questions or concerns about the treatments, please do not hesitate to contact the Foster Coordinator.

Medicating Puppies

A note about treating your puppy: In general, if you need to treat a puppy, try to medicate him in an impersonal way. If you hold the puppy in your lap to medicate him, he will associate being picked up with being medicated and in worst case become scared every time you go to cuddle him. It is better to put the puppy up on a countertop, maybe wrapping him in a towel to administer medication. It is also worth while to give extra praise and if appropriate give him a treat before and after medicating him, as this will help ease the stress of the situation and may even result in a positive association to medication time.