

Cutaneous and renal glomerular vasculopathy/Alabama rot – FAQ/ Information Sheet (updated October 2018)

What is CRGV?

CRGV is a disease caused by damage to blood vessels of the skin and kidney. It causes tiny blood clots to form in the blood vessels which blocks them and can ultimately lead to damage of the affected tissue. In the skin, this causes ulceration; however, in the kidney it can lead to severe organ dysfunction (kidney failure).

What causes CRGV?

The cause at this time remains unknown but investigations are ongoing.

How do I stop my dog from getting CRGV?

Unfortunately, as the cause is currently unknown, it is very difficult to give specific advice about prevention. You may wish to consider bathing any area of your dog which becomes wet or muddy on a walk; however, at this stage we do not know if this is necessary or of any benefit.

Where should I walk my dog to avoid CRGV?

Cases of CRGV have been reported from across many different counties in the UK and we are not currently advising dog owners to avoid any particular locations. Although an environmental cause for this disease is considered possible it has not been proven with testing to date.

A map detailing all confirmed cases since 2012, is available at www.vets4pets.com/stop-alabama-rot/

How will I know if my dog gets CRGV?

Unexplained redness, sores or swelling of the skin (particularly on the paws or legs but also the body, face, tongue or mouth) are often the first sign of this disease. It is important to remember that most of the time a skin problem will NOT be caused by CRGV; however, the lesions in CRGV can be difficult to distinguish from cuts, wounds, stings or bites, so if in doubt it is better to seek veterinary advice. Even if the skin changes are caused by CRGV, many dogs will not develop kidney problems and will recover fully. However if a dog does go on to develop kidney failure, signs to be concerned about would include lethargy, decreased appetite, nausea, vomiting, increased thirst or decreased urination.

How common is CRGV?

Since November 2012 and October 2018 there have been 169 confirmed cases of CRGV. Recent research has revealed almost 95% of confirmed cases have occurred between November and May and also that most of the cases have been in western and southern parts of England; far fewer cases have been reported from the eastern half of the country and East Anglia in particular. **KEY MESSAGE** - although CRGV can be very serious, it is important to remember that compared to other problems seen in dogs, it is still a **very rare condition**.

How is CRGV treated?

If your dog develops a skin lesion your vet will be able to advise you on the most appropriate management. Your vet will decide if your dog needs antibiotics and if the area needs covering and if early monitoring of kidney function with blood and urine tests is needed. Some forms of painkiller (called non-steroidals) may be best avoided. Dogs developing kidney failure (which is called acute kidney injury) will need much more intensive management and your vet may recommend referral to a specialist. In specific circumstances advanced supportive care options including plasma exchange and dialysis may be considered for dogs with CRGV. These are available at the Royal Veterinary College (RVC Small Animal Referrals).

Is CRGV the same illness as seasonal canine illness (SCI)?

No – these are 2 completely separate illnesses causing different signs. SCI causes vomiting, diarrhoea and lethargy with no ulcerative skin lesions.

Does CRGV affect other animals or humans?

CRGV has not been seen in animals other than dogs. Owners of dogs affected by CRGV have not been affected by this illness.

What can I do to help – what research is ongoing?

A number of research projects are running to further investigate the cause of CRGV. Research into new diseases requires a lot of funding. This pays for the development of new diagnostic tests, investigation of the causes of the disease and ultimately the development of more effective treatments. One of the ways to help fight this condition is to consider fund-raising or making a donation to help support this work. The Alabama Rot Research Fund (ARRF) is a national charity aiming to raise awareness and funds for research www.rrf.co.uk