

My dog is vomiting blood - What should I do?

If your dog is vomiting blood, it is a potentially serious medical condition that requires immediate medical attention. The sooner you seek veterinary care, the sooner your veterinarian can identify and treat the cause.

How can I tell if my dog is vomiting blood?

Your dog's vomit may be streaked with fresh red blood, indicating it is from the stomach or upper part of the small intestine. If the blood is partially digested, from lower in the intestines, it will look more like coffee grounds. Your dog may show signs of tiredness, lack of appetite and/or abnormal stool, including diarrhea. Blood in the stool may appear fresh if it's from the colon or dark and tarry or sticky if it is from the upper parts of the intestinal tract or stomach.

What should I do if my dog is vomiting blood?

It can be alarming for you to see your dog throwing up blood, but the most important thing you can do is to go to your closest veterinarian as soon as possible. Bleeding from the intestinal tract or vomiting blood can be serious, depending on the rate of blood loss and the underlying cause.

What can the veterinarian do if my dog is vomiting blood?

Your veterinarian will take a careful history and may perform a series of tests to determine the severity of the blood loss, and the source of the bleeding. These tests may include a complete blood cell count, internal organ function screen, X-rays, fecal analysis and other tests deemed appropriate. Possible causes for bloody vomit in canines include:

- Chronic, severe vomiting
- Foreign bodies
- Trauma (including eating bones or other materials that injure the gastrointestinal tract)
- Infection (bacterial or viral)
- Parasites
- Clotting disorders (including ingestion of rat poison)
- Toxins (certain plants and heavy metals like lead or arsenic)
- Hemorrhagic gastroenteritis (HGE): severe bloody vomiting and bloody diarrhea
- Stomach ulcers: can be caused by medications including non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications, steroids and aspirin
- Underlying medical issues (kidney disease, liver disease or hormonal imbalance)
- Tumors of the esophagus or stomach

When the underlying cause is established, then appropriate treatment will be recommended. Treatment may include supportive care with the administration of intravenous fluids, anti-vomiting/nausea medication, gastric protectants, antibiotics and/or the deworming of your dog.

