



Lungworm - a potential killer in dogs

Over 200 cases now confirmed in the Midlands

By Dr Kevin Orembo, Blacks Vets
BVM Cert AVP MRCVS

Spring is in the air and as temperatures start to creep above freezing, our thoughts may turn to getting back outside for some fresh air. For dog owners, walkies might start to feel more enjoyable when the wind is a little less biting and for the dogs themselves, the urge for adventure returns when they aren't slipping around on frozen ground or braving a driving sleet shower.

As gardens slowly come back to life and the first green shoots tentatively poke through the soil, the slugs and snails begin to make their presence known, and it's these seemingly harmless creatures that are the subject of this issue's article.

What is Lungworm?

Lungworm (*Angiostrongylus vasorum*) is a parasite that is carried by slugs and snails which can cause serious health issues in dogs and can kill if not treated in time. Infection occurs when a slug or snail carrying the Lungworm larvae is ingested by a dog. Slugs or snails of any size can carry the larvae meaning that even if your dog isn't normally interested in eating these creatures, they may accidentally do so by drinking from a puddle or outdoor water bowl, eating grass or rummaging through the undergrowth on a walk. The slime produced by molluscs can also cause infection meaning that toys left outside may have been crawled on by a slug or snail leaving a contaminated trail behind. In short, it is very easy for a dog to pick up Lungworm without their owner realising.

What to look out for...

If you know that your dog has eaten a slug or a snail or suspect that they could have come into contact with one, it is very important that they see a vet at the earliest opportunity if they present any of these symptoms:

- Coughing
- Tiring easily / lethargic
- Vomiting
- Diarrhoea
- Loss of appetite / weight loss
- Excessive bleeding from minor wounds
- Nosebleeds
- Change in usual behavior

These symptoms can of course be indicative of many conditions, not just Lungworm, which can make the problem tricky to diagnose. However, your vet can help confirm diagnosis through blood tests or stool (poo) samples. Early diagnosis means early treatment and a greater chance of a positive outcome.

Where in the UK is Lungworm found?

Lungworm is now endemic across the UK with 203 cases confirmed within a 50 mile radius of Dudley and its likely that this figure could be much higher when factoring in unconfirmed cases. Cases have been reported in locations such as Stourbridge, Kidderminster, Wolverhampton, Bromsgrove, West Bromwich, Worcester and Droitwich.

How to keep your dog safe

Lungworm can be treated and can result in a full recovery if diagnosed in time, but as the saying goes, prevention is better than cure. Talk to your vet about a parasite programme suitable for your dog. At Blacks vets we use and recommend a spot treatment that is applied to the back of the neck once a month and covers Lungworm as well as other common parasites such as Fleas, Roundworm and Hookworm. Fortunately, this is part of our Protect My Pet Club package which provides members with year round Flea, Parasite and Worm treatments, as well as annual vaccinations and boosters, health checks and discounts on routine care. Find out more by visiting www.blacksvets.co.uk

from
ONLY
£8.99
per month



PROTECT YOUR PET AND YOUR POCKET



- 🐾 **SAVE BETWEEN 30-60%**
- 🐾 **Full annual vaccination / boosters**
- 🐾 **Comprehensive worming programme**
- 🐾 **Flea control programme**
- 🐾 **Added parasite control programme**
- 🐾 **TWO nose to tail health assessments per year**
- 🐾 **FREE nail clip during 6 monthly nurse & vet check**
- 🐾 **One additional FREE veterinary consultation**



Join today!

For Dogs, Cats and Rabbits

Terms and conditions may apply.

DUDLEY HOSPITAL T: 01384 252 509	OLDBURY SURGERY T: 0121 552 9996	QUINTON SURGERY T: 0121 248 9003	LYE SURGERY T: 01384 897 632	SEDGLEY SURGERY T: 01902 670 900
--	--	--	--	--

