



Salmon Poisoning Disease

What is it?

- Salmon poisoning disease is a potentially fatal condition seen in dogs and is primarily seen in the Pacific Northwest.
- The disease is caused by *Neorickettsial helminthoeca*, a bacterium which resides in a parasitic fluke called *Nanophytes salmincola*.
- The fluke infects salmon, trout, and other anadromous fish (fish that swim upstream) and resides in the muscle of those fish.
- When dogs ingest the raw infected fish, the fluke break free and attach to the intestinal lining of dogs.
- When this occurs, the bacteria are released and absorbed into the dog's bloodstream and infects the dog's white blood cells.

Clinical Signs

- Signs usually occur 7-10 days after exposure to infected fish and signs vary from patient to patient.
- Common signs include:
 - Fever
 - Lethargy/depression
 - Loss of appetite
 - Vomiting
 - Diarrhea (with or without blood)
 - Dehydration
 - Enlarged lymph nodes

Treatment

- Often treatment involves hospitalization because the dog will need IV antibiotics and IV fluids.
- Supportive care to aid in nausea and to decrease fever may also be used.
- Treatment of the bacteria is done with a specific antibiotic and the fluke is treated with dewormer.
- If discovered and treated early enough, prognosis for a full recovery is good. Many dogs respond to treatment quickly.
- Important to remember that even if your dog has had salmon poisoning disease in the past does not mean they are completely immune to future infections.

Prevention

- The best treatment is prevention.
- Control what your dog eats while on fishing trips.
- Leash your dog at the beach or river so that you can monitor its activities.
- Wrap garbage, especially fish entrails, and dispose in well-secured cans.
- Don't feed raw fish to your dog. Cook fish thoroughly or deep-freeze it for a minimum of 2 weeks to destroy the parasite before feeding it to your dog

