

Prevention and Control Measures for *Brucellosis*

What is it? *Brucella canis* is a bacteria that can cause significant reproductive issues in dogs and potentially severe illness in people.

Do I need to worry about this? Yes. Brucellosis can be transmitted through all the bodily fluids of an infected animal, including vaginal discharge, aborted material, blood, semen, and nasal, oral, or ocular secretions. Dogs can become infected from simply walking around in an area where an infected dog has been or from interacting with infected dogs that have been newly introduced to the household. Disease transmission can occur at the time of breeding or whelping and through contact with dirty equipment.

Some dogs with *Brucella* will never show signs of being sick until they have a reproductive problem. In bitches, Brucellosis can cause abortions, fertility issues, and uterine infections. Puppies can contract the disease from their dams. In male dogs, Brucellosis affects the reproductive organs, causing infertility. Any dog can get Brucellosis, but it is breeding animals that are at the highest risk of contracting the disease and passing it on.

Can people get sick from this? Yes! People, especially those who are immunocompromised, can become very ill. Symptoms range from headache and fatigue to abortion, infertility, organ failure, and sepsis. The illness may be long-term. Please contact your doctor with any questions about your health.

Is there a treatment? There is no effective treatment, so prevention is key. Brucellosis is a lifelong infection. Infected dogs must be either spayed/castrated and strictly isolated, or must be humanely euthanized.

How can I protect my dogs, kennel and reputation? Routinely test your breeding animals for Brucellosis. VMC uses an in-house test called the "RSAT" (Rapid Slide Agglutination Test), which is an easy, quick, and cost-effective way to determine if your dog is a *Brucella* suspect.

Our *brucellosis* protocol: For your own peace of mind, the health of your animals and for the safety of our staff, **ALL breeding animals must be current with a negative *Brucella* test.** This can be performed at any veterinary clinic, but VMC must have an emailed or paper copy on file to proceed with breeding – any of the available diagnostic tests are acceptable. VMC can also perform this test for you same-day from a simple blood sample. In order for us to be able to perform breeding management appointments:

- **Male dogs** are to be tested every **6 months**
 - o **Applies to dogs that are seen at VMC as well as for shipped semen we receive*
 - o **Exception: frozen semen from several years ago from a dog which is now deceased*
- **Female dogs** are to be tested **on each heat cycle** they are to be bred on
- Testing can also be performed at your request in between these time points
- New dogs to your kennel should have a negative test prior to acquisition. Additional testing and a quarantine period is recommended for large breeding operations.

PLEASE NOTE: Any dog that tests positive for both parts of the in-house test at VMC will be subject to further testing. No further breeding management can be performed until a negative confirmatory test result is obtained. Please be aware that some test results may take 3-5 days to return, and plan accordingly. We reserve the right to refuse services to any client that does not comply with this protocol.

