

# Veterinary Protocol for Diarrhoea

Your Guide Dog puppy may experience episodes of changing faecal consistency during its time with you. It is important for you know what is normal and what is not, and when it is necessary to seek veterinary attention.

Stools may vary in consistency within normal healthy dogs, and can even change day to day. Things such as diet or environmental changes may also effect stool consistency. This is of particular concern with puppies who are still developing normal gut flora and are very sensitive to changes. A small percentage of our dog colony suffers from intermittent loose stools and this is considered normal.

In order to help identify and describe a stool sample, we use the [Waltham Faecal Scoring System](https://gdnpuppycentral.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/v4-Faecal-Conisistency-Chart-Waltham-Fecal-Scoring-Chart.pdf). As a general guide, a grade between 2.5 to 3.5 is considered acceptable. A grade 4 or above is considered diarrhoea and should be treated depending on the basis of whether it is uncomplicated or complicated.

## Uncomplicated Diarrhoea

This is diarrhoea (grade 4 or above) that is not associated with other signs of being unwell such as fever, vomiting, lack of energy or loss of appetite.

As a general rule, this is **not an emergency** and can be dealt with accordingly;

* Inform your Puppy Development Advisor (PDA) of the occurrence, particularly if this is happening for more than one bowel motion.
* If the next bowel motion is normal, no treatment is required – just monitor your pup.
* If continued grade 4 or above, skip the next meal to allow for some GI rest.
* Ensure plenty of water and encourage your pup to drink.
* Start a bland diet of boiled chicken breast (without skin) plus boiled white rice. The ratio should be 1/3 chicken to 2/3 rice.
  + First meal should be equal in volume to one third of the amount of Advance kibble normally fed, then gradually increased over the next few meals (refer to [Bland Diet Feeding Guideline](https://gdnpuppycentral.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/v5-Bland-diet-feeding-guidelines-accessible.docx)).
  + If diarrhoea recurs during this process, skip a meal and restart the protocol.
  + Continue with bland diet until stools are firm for a minimum of 4 consecutive bowel movements.
* Once back to normal, begin gradual transition back to Advance kibble (refer to [Food Transitioning Guidelines](https://gdnpuppycentral.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/v6-Food-Transitioning-Guidelines-accessible.docx)) and commence loading dose of Protexin for 7 days.
* If there is no response to the bland diet or the dog progresses to complicated diarrhoea then contact your PDA and/or Guide Dog Centre (GDC) Veterinary Team to discuss.

## Complicated Diarrhoea

This is diarrhoea associated with other signs of being unwell as discussed above, as well as;

* Blood in the stool.
* Persists for more than 3 days despite management (dogs > 12 weeks of age).
* Persists with no improvement for more than 12 hours (puppies < 12 weeks of age).

This is considered **an emergency** and requires veterinary attention. Contact the GDC Veterinary Team and they will advise on further action. Please collect a faecal sample so that the Veterinary Team may perform further testing if required.