Information about Canine Leishmaniasis (also known as ‘Kala-azar’)

**What is Leishmaniasis (leishmania)?**

Leishmaniasis is a tropical disease transmitted to dogs by a tiny sandfly. The sandfly is active between dusk and dawn and is common in all Mediterranean. When an infected sandfly bites a dog, the dog is in danger of contracting the disease, unless it is protected by an insect repellent collar.

**What happens if a dog is diagnosed with Leishmaniasis?**

Leishmaniasis cannot currently be cured, but it can be treated. A dog with leishmaniasis can live a happy and healthy life for many years. The usual treatment is with Allopurinol tablets, which are cheap and readily available as they are used for treatment of gout in humans.

Vets in countries like Greece, Spain, Portugal, Turkey, routinely treat infected dogs rather than euthanise them. The sooner the condition is diagnosed, the more successful the treatment is, but there are no guarantees. An owned dog, who is well fed and nourished, is of course likely to respond to treatment better than a stray dog who lives on scraps scavenged from the streets.

**What other precautions should be taken in dogs who have Leishmaniasis?**

The dogs need regular monitoring via blood tests. At least once a year a test should be done to measure the level of Leishmaniasis antibodies in the blood. This test can be done in Bristol in the UK. A general blood test should also be done to ensure that the dog’s kidneys and other organs are all functioning well. This can be done by any veterinarian.

**Can Leishmaniasis be transmitted to other dogs or humans?**

There is NO danger of Leishmaniasis being transmitted to other dogs in the UK and there is no danger of the disease being transmitted to humans. The sandfly that transmits the disease does not exist in the UK and canine Leishmaniasis is not the same disease that affects humans in some parts of the world.

**Are dogs all tested for Leishmaniasis?**

Yes, ALL dogs we bring into the UK are blood-tested for Leishmaniasis before they leave Greece. However there is always a slight possibility that a dog who tests negative prior to leaving Greece may, a few months later (or even a year or two later) start showing symptoms of the disease. It is therefore wise to blood-test the dogs at least once a year for a couple of years. Your vet will need to send the blood sample to a laboratory in Bristol. The test should be done sooner, of course, if any symptoms of Leishmaniasis are noted.

**What are the symptoms of Leishmaniasis?**

Sometimes there are no symptoms and the dog seems perfectly fit. However, common symptoms are:-

· Weight loss

· Anemia and lethargy – your dog may not be ‘just lazy’

·  Hair loss and skin lesions – particularly around the face and ears

·  ‘Dandruff’ noted in the coat

·  Long and thick claws

Most UK vets have little or no experience with Leishmaniasis and will welcome our input. It is imperative that you contact us before you take your dog to a vet, should you worry that he/she may be infected.

If you have any questions or concerns about this issue, either before or after you adopt a dog via please contact us immediately, especially if your dog is unwell and if you are uncertain about what to do. We all want your dog to enjoy a long and happy life and we are here to help and support you.

More information can be found on: http://www.leishmaniasis.info/

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I (your full name) ……………………….… confirm that I have read and understood the information about Leishmaniasis and accept that there is a small risk that the dog I’m adopting may be infected, despite the fact that .................have taken all necessary steps (blood tests) to ensure the dog is in good health.

Signature …………………………………………………….

Date …………………………………………..