

# Alabama Rot

There has been a lot in the news about Alabama Rot recently much of which is confusing, misleading and very worrying. We would just like to clarify the situation as it currently stands.

What is Alabama Rot – its official term is cutaneous and renal glomerular vasculopathy (CGRV). Essentially this is a description of what it does and where it has its effects – cutaneous = skin, renal glomerular = the internal tubes in the kidney, vasculopathy = disease affecting the blood vessels.

The actual cause is not currently known but the common presentation is of ulcerated skin on the limbs, muzzle or underside, but it can be up to a week (average 3 days) before any problems with the kidneys are present. The damage to the kidneys is caused by microscopic clots in the blood vessels.

There is a current theory that it is caused by a particular bacteria releasing toxins that cause the damage, this is unproven but supports the findings that antibiotics do not greatly affect the outcome of the disease.

## What do I really need to know?

- Firstly it is **VERY RARE**. There have been only 120 confirmed cases in the UK up to the end of last year. There are approximately 8.5 million dogs in the UK meaning the chance of your dog getting the condition is 0.0014%. If we assume that not all cases are confirmed and the actual figure of cases should be ten times higher this is still a very rare disease
- You will notice we didn't include a picture of a dog with a skin lesion – this was on purpose as there is not a 'typical' lesion to look out for and the overwhelming majority of skin lesions will be just that. However any area of ulcerated skin should be cleaned and veterinary advice sought. Should the vet deem the lesion slightly unusual we may take a blood sample to check for certain changes that may be present
- There is no test that can diagnose CGRV. Blood tests may show changes at an early stage, but in 50% of dogs these may be normal.
- There is very little that can be done in terms of prevention, particularly as the exact cause has not been established. However it seems sensible that whenever you have taken your dog out in wet/ muddy areas to ensure that they are washed off thoroughly. Any small scratches etc. should ideally be cleaned with hibiscrub.