

Rescue dogs from abroad

There are concerns that dogs and cats that enter the UK from abroad may serve as reservoirs of infectious diseases that could pose a risk to the individual dog, the UK dog population and be a public health risk (i.e. to owners, veterinary personnel, bystanders) should the disease or its vector (i.e. ticks) become endemic here.

Ideally all pets / rescued animals should be tested before coming into the country and again several months after arriving in the country. Many are not tested and may have the disease but show no clinical signs.

One of our biggest concerns is *Brucella canis* as this can infect humans.

Brucella canis

- Primarily from Romania (+ eastern Europe + Mediterranean) – limited data on distribution.
- Significant zoonotic risk (this means it can spread to humans as well).
 - Can be fatal in immunocompromised individuals and concerns in pregnant people.
 - Dog-to-human transmission is associated with (usually prolonged) close contact or via contact with bodily fluids like reproductive fluid/semen/urine/saliva from infected dogs.
 - PPE is key when handling travelled dogs and any fluid samples from these dogs.
- Risk of transmission to other dogs via close contact or contact with bodily fluids.
- Infections are commonly subclinical in dogs; this means they do not show any symptoms.
- We screen for *Brucella canis* using a serology blood test, this checks for the presence of antibodies, which indicate your dog is generating an immune response against *Brucella canis*.
 - This blood test should be performed before importation to prevent *Brucella*-positive dogs entering the country – this is now required for all dogs being imported from Romania.
 - A negative serology test performed when your dog was living abroad does not exclude the possibility of infection as it can take 3 months for an antibody test to become positive. This means the test should also be repeated 3 months after entry into the UK.
 - If your dog is less than 12 months old at the time of testing, this also cannot exclude infection as the antibody response in young dogs may not be adequate to generate a positive test result. Either we will wait until they are 12 months to test them, or we will test them every 3 months until they are 12 months to confirm they are negative.
 - If you have a certificate of a prior *Brucella canis* test, please send us a copy.
- DO NOT IMPORT dogs that are not tested or are positive – more compulsory testing likely in future.
- *Brucella canis* is a reportable disease to APHA (government branch).
- Euthanasia of positive dogs is strongly recommended due to the zoonotic risk and inability to cure the infection.
- There of this infection becoming established in UK if we are not vigilant.

We advise that all foreign imported dogs are tested for *Brucella canis* to reduce the risk to the public and to veterinary staff who are likely to handle blood samples, saliva and reproductive organs. The test is advisory, not compulsory; however, the care provided for dogs that have not been tested may be limited to emergency care only and we will treat your dog as if it is *Brucella*-positive (please see our practice policy for *Brucella* positive dogs on our website).

****We are unable to neuter any dogs who have lived abroad without a negative Brucella serology test result performed more than 3 months after arriving in the UK****

There are lots of other exotic diseases that can affect dogs who have lived abroad. As with *Brucella canis*, many dogs who are infected will not show any clinical signs, sometimes for years. Some dogs will have had **Snap 4Dx Plus** test before travelling, please ask for the results and bring us a copy. We may discuss testing for these exotic diseases, either to screen for these infections in a dog who does not have any symptoms or to test for these infections in an unwell dog.

Here are a few of the other infections that may be a problem:

- **Heartworm (*Dirofilaria immitis*)**
- ***Leishmania infantum***
- ***Babesia canis***
- ***Anaplasma* species**
- ***Hepatozoon canis***
- ***Echinococcus multilocularis***
- **Other worms**
- **Ticks**

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