

The Rocky Report

From Rocky the Rocket



A Periodic Report

RockyTheRocket@Blackfoot.Net

Issue N° 5 - July 26, 2011

Dogs & West Nile Virus (WNV) ...



There is a threat of WNV where I live & may also be a threat in your area. My master thought it might be helpful to provide information about WNV to help you & your best friend. The following information is from <http://>

PetHealth.PetWellBeing.com/wiki/Dog_West_Nile_Virus. For the purpose of space, veterinarian is abbreviated to vet.

About Dogs & WNV. Dogs do not seem to be particularly susceptible to WNV, as their immune system is able to effectively fight off the virus. Yet, to be safe, it's always a good idea to be aware of the potential risks your pet faces & to know how to best prevent & avoid them. This is especially true if your dog is elderly, weak, or has a compromised immune system, as such animals will be more susceptible to all illnesses & WNV.

Symptoms. Most dogs that have WNV will simply carry the virus without showing any symptoms or suffering from any form of ill health. However, for those dogs that do become ill, there are a number of symptoms that will likely be displayed. Fever & weakness are two warning signs that will likely arise in a case of WNV. Muscle spasms & a loss of muscle coordination may also occur. A number of neurological signs can also be indicative of WNV, including behaviors such as head tilting, circling & trouble with walking. Depression, a loss of appetite & other neurological disorders including seizures or an apparent personality change can also occur when a dog is suffering from WNV. If your dog is displaying any WNV symptoms, contact your vet immediately as these warning signs & behaviors can be indicative of WNV or

another serious illness as well. Either way, the sooner your dog can receive treatment, the better. A vet will be able to determine whether your pet's symptoms are being caused by WNV or another medical condition, & will be able to administer treatment accordingly.

Diagnosis. If your dog is exhibiting signs & behaviors consistent with a WNV infection, your vet will begin by taking a complete medical history & conducting a thorough physical examination. The vet will also look for clinical signs & any indication that your pet's symptoms could be caused by another illness or medical condition. It's important to carefully describe the symptoms & behaviors you observed at home to assist the vet. If your dog has recently been exposed to mosquitoes, it's important to mention this, as this may help with respect to reaching a prompt & accurate diagnosis.

In order to rule out other causes of illness & to identify if WNV is present, a variety of tests may be performed. Most likely a blood test will be conducted to check for the presence of WNV in the dog's bloodstream. Once a dog has been diagnosed with WNV, an appropriate treatment plan can be developed & implemented, hopefully saving your dog's life & restoring its health.

Treatment. When a dog becomes infected with WNV, there is no specific treatment available to cure this disease. However, generalized viral treatment & treatments for encephalitis may be effective, especially when the illness is caught in its earlier stages. This is why it's vitally important to have your dog examined by a vet as soon as possible if you notice unusual symptoms & behaviors such as those caused by WNV.

Prevention. There are a number of ways you can safeguard your dog against mosquitoes & the diseases that they carry. The best way to protect your dog from WNV is to limit your pet's exposure to mosquitoes.

Avoid having your dog outdoors during the evenings or at dawn, as these are the times when mosquitoes are most active. It's also important to ensure that the environment surrounding your home is not providing a haven for breeding mosquitoes. Make sure that areas of standing water are eliminated if at all possible, including ponds & birdbaths. Also, outdoor water bowls should be emptied & refilled daily to ensure that mosquitoes cannot lay their eggs in the water.

When attempting to keep your pet mosquito free, keep in mind that many insect repellents that are safe for humans are extremely harmful for dogs. There are insect repellents available that have been specifically designed for dogs, including homeopathic & natural options. If you wish to use such a product, be sure to consult with your vet first to ensure that the product is safe for your pet.

Another important step that can help to protect your dog from WNV is to make sure that he or she has a strong & healthy immune system. This will help your dog combat WNV if it is bitten by a disease-carrying mosquito. Supplements are particularly beneficial with regards to bolstering your dog's immune system, especially omega-3 fatty acids & antioxidants, but to be safe check with your vet first. By providing your dog with immune support, you will be increasing its chances of fighting off WNV as well as many other illnesses that could potentially harm your beloved pet's health.

My apologies for such small print but my master thought it was important to include most of the info from this website rather than to leave any of you in suspense. Also, please consult with your vet for the latest info on the risk of WNV to your best friend. I am glad my master is concerned with WNV & protecting my health, & your best friend will be too.

