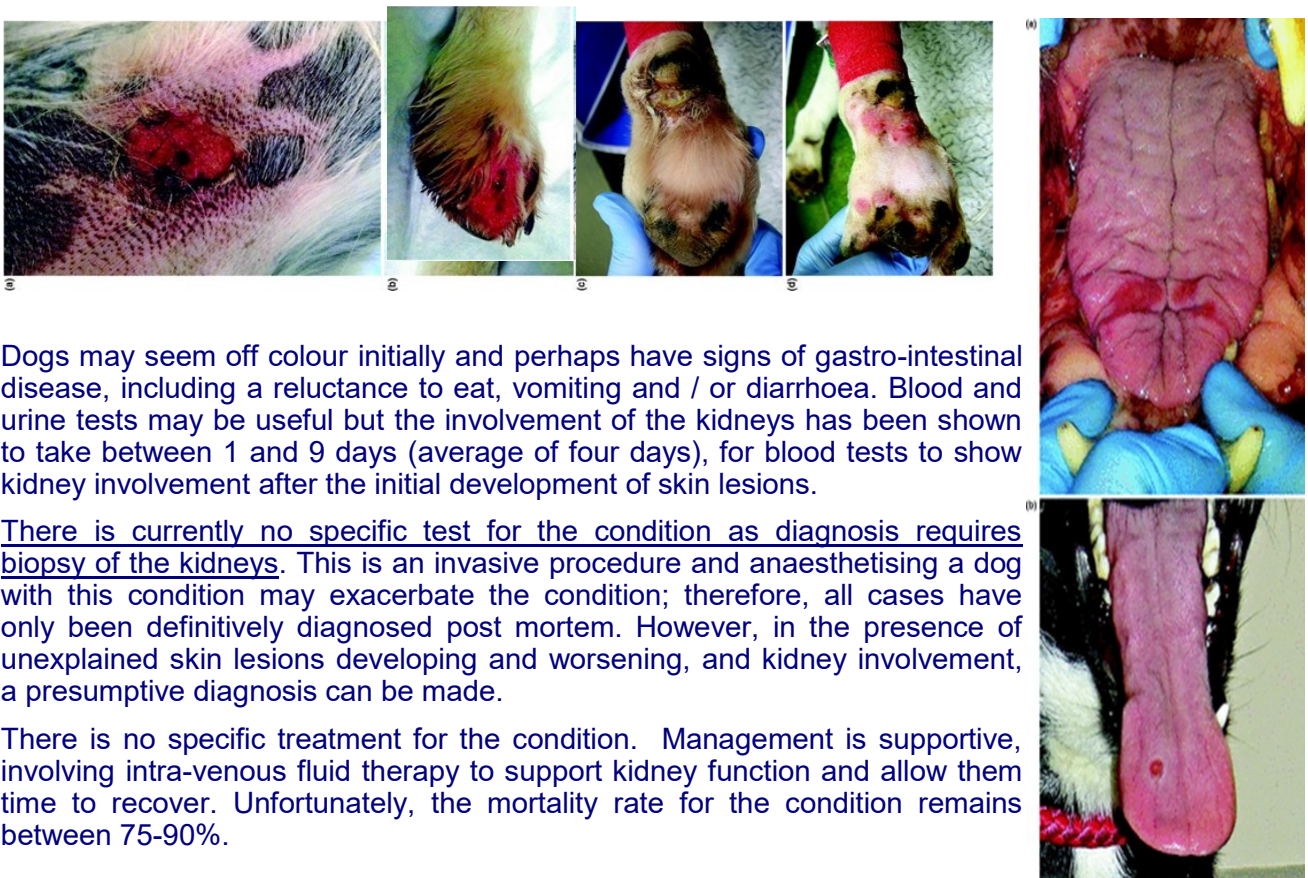


Cutaneous and Renal Glomerular Vasculopathy (Alabama Rot)

Up to the end of 2019 there have been less than 200 confirmed cases of this disease in the UK since 2012. However, for those living in areas where cases have been confirmed, we understand that there are naturally concerns from dog owners wanting to understand more about the risk from this disease.

The cause of this disease has not yet been established and so there remains no way of knowing how to prevent your dog from contracting the disease. What we do know is that it causes damage to blood vessels in the skin and kidneys. In the kidneys this causes a syndrome called Acute Kidney Injury (AKI). The disease also appears to have a seasonal distribution with most cases described in the winter and spring.

The initial clinical sign observed is one of unexplained skin lesions, often of the lower limbs / feet, but these can also be found on the underneath of the chest/abdomen and on the muzzle/tongue. **It is important to emphasise that the majority of skin lesions are caused by cuts or grazes.**



Dogs may seem off colour initially and perhaps have signs of gastro-intestinal disease, including a reluctance to eat, vomiting and / or diarrhoea. Blood and urine tests may be useful but the involvement of the kidneys has been shown to take between 1 and 9 days (average of four days), for blood tests to show kidney involvement after the initial development of skin lesions.

There is currently no specific test for the condition as diagnosis requires biopsy of the kidneys. This is an invasive procedure and anaesthetising a dog with this condition may exacerbate the condition; therefore, all cases have only been definitively diagnosed post mortem. However, in the presence of unexplained skin lesions developing and worsening, and kidney involvement, a presumptive diagnosis can be made.

There is no specific treatment for the condition. Management is supportive, involving intra-venous fluid therapy to support kidney function and allow them time to recover. Unfortunately, the mortality rate for the condition remains between 75-90%.

As the cause of this disease is not known, nor indeed exact pin-pointed locations for where dogs may have previously contracted it (only where cases were reported*), it is difficult to advise how best to protect dogs from this illness. We feel adjustments to lifestyle are currently considered unnecessary and owners should continue to enjoy exercising their pets as they do currently.

However, our best advice would be to ensure washing dogs' feet after every walk combined with a visual check for any unexplained lesions on the limbs.

A recent (2015) peer reviewed article can be found here:
<http://veterinaryrecord.bmj.com/content/176/15/384>

* link to reported cases <https://www.vets4pets.com/pet-health-advice/alabama-rot/>