



Brucella canis (B. canis) infection: Guidance for Owner of Infected Dog

Per direction of the Montana State Veterinarian, veterinarians are expected to provide the following guidance to the owner of any dog that tests positive for B. canis and elects lifelong isolation of the dog as an alternative to the recommendation of euthanasia. If an owner elects to not euthanize, the dog is expected to be managed according to the following guidelines for life.

B. canis, a reportable disease in Montana per Administrative Rule 32.3.104, is a bacterial infection of dogs that can cause reproductive abnormalities, lymph node enlargement, lameness, and pain due to inflammation of the disks within the spinal column. In some instances, dogs display no symptoms, but are still capable of spreading this infection.

Key considerations of *B. canis* infection:

- *B. canis* infection in dogs is lifelong with devastating complications from symptoms.
- Euthanasia of *B. canis* positive dogs is the recommended treatment.
- An alternative to euthanasia is lifelong isolation and long-term treatment with medically important antibiotics; antibiotic therapy may have variable results for symptom control and is not curative.

Importantly, this disease can spread to humans. The risks of *B. canis* infection in humans are not fully understood, diagnosis is difficult, and the Centers for Disease Control estimates that the disease is underdiagnosed. Owners are encouraged to alert their health care provider of exposure and review additional information regarding the zoonotic risks and mitigation of *B. canis* in humans at Montana’s Department of Public Health and Human Service’s website (www.dphhs.mt.gov), or by calling DPHHS at 406-444-0273.

Recommendations to minimize the risk of *B. canis* transmission to humans and other dogs:

- Spay/neuter *B. canis* infected dog.
- Restrict the dog’s interaction with immunocompromised people and children.
- Minimize the dog’s contacts to as few people and dogs as possible.
- Avoid contact with dog’s bodily fluids including saliva, urine, feces, and reproductive fluids.
- Should the dog switch owner, veterinary care, and/or move from Montana, the owner has an obligation to disclose diagnosis to the new owner, new veterinary clinic, and/or new state animal health officials.

It is the owner’s responsibility to minimize disease spread and clearly disclose *B. canis* infection to any potential contacts. Failure to disclose diagnosis of *B. canis* infection and ignoring the recommendations above increases risk of disease spread to other pets and people. The DOL has limited authority for enforcement of *B. canis* recommendations. However, animal owners who have failed to disclose disease status have had civil charges brought against them for lack of disclosure for other contagious diseases.

Veterinarian signature indicates that this guidance was presented to the owner. Owner signature attests to receiving this document and the **Brucella canis (B. canis) infection: Prevention and Control** document.

Veterinarian Name and Signature	Print	Sign
Veterinary Clinic Name		
Owner Name and Signature	Print	Sign
Dog Name and Signalment		
Test History: Type/Date		

Please provide a copy to owners. Send signed form to Montana Department of Livestock, PO Box 202001, Helena, MT 59620

Please contact the Department of Livestock at (406) 444-2976 or livemail@mt.gov with questions. Guidance updated December 2022.