

## Update on Fading Puppy Syndrome from Veterinary Record

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The Veterinary Record of November 2013 (Vol. 173, No. 17) features a short communication that concludes with the statement: ‘Staphylococcus dermatitis/pododermatitis should be recognised as a cause of canine neonatal mortality and as one more component of ‘fading puppy’ syndrome’.

The offending organism is *Staphylococcus intermedius* which is the main *Staphylococcus* involved in pyoderma (deep and superficial skin infections) in adult dogs in general. When a bitch has this infection (and it may not be obvious) the puppies are infected during or immediately after birth. Deaths in puppies in the first 14 days of life from this infection have been associated with navel/umbilical infections, small multiple abscess, and septicaemia. Sometimes dermatitis of the little pads and chin can be seen.

In our Spring Newsletter 2013 we published an article entitled ‘*Fading Puppy Syndrome - A Review of a Research Paper*’ in which we brought together all the latest research on fading puppies. In it we found that the cause in most cases was largely unknown, but that a significant percentage of the known reasons for puppy mortality was indeed infection. This, most recent, research confirms this view and identifies an important cause.

What to do?

- ≡ If you have not had a problem with puppy deaths, and have recently bred healthy litters, then do not worry about it.
- ≡ If you have had a problem with puppy deaths in the first 14 days of life, then infection may be one of the reasons. Infection is responsible for 7% of the known causes of

death in young puppies and most losses occur up to 5 days of age. Most deaths occur at around 3 1/2 days. If you recognise this description, then read on.

- ≡ Our advice has always been to make sure that the bitch is clean and infection free before she whelps. We have advised clipping the hair around her back end (as well as cleaning her teeth) and giving her a bath no later than a week before whelping. An antibacterial shampoo is a good idea.
- ≡ If your bitch has a skin infection of any kind while pregnant it best that this is treated aggressively by your vet before whelping. For advice on this, please contact the NTCGB Health Subcommittee.

Most whelpings and raising of litters go well, and can be genuinely delightful experiences.

When problems, like 'fading puppies' arise, it is important that we are up to date with the research and act promptly and appropriately.