



## Fact sheet

### Canine Vector-Borne Diseases (CVBD)

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#### **Ehrlichiosis**

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Canine monocytic ehrlichiosis is caused by several rickettsial species of the genus *Ehrlichia* that invade monocytes and macrophages. Like babesiosis, it's one of the most important tick-transmitted infectious diseases causing severe clinical illness in dogs.

#### **Pathogen**

- Rickettsia *Ehrlichia canis* (Gram-negative, coccoid rickettsia)

#### **Vector**

- *E. canis* is transmitted by the tick *Rhipicephalus sanguineus* (Brown Dog tick): transstadial (larvae-nymph-adult) transmission

#### **Distribution**

- Widespread disease in tropical and temperate areas of the world
- *E. canis* has been reported from the USA, Europe (Mediterranean region) and Africa
- The geographic distribution of *E. canis* has expanded with the distribution of the primary vector *R. sanguineus*



### **Clinical Signs and Diagnosis**

- Incubation period of 8-20 days, followed by an acute clinical phase with clinical signs including intermittent fever, lymphadenopathy, bleeding, weight loss, severe eye disease and other signs of immune-mediated disease and bone marrow hyperplasia subsequent with cytopaenia
- Diagnosis is made by demonstration of Rickettsia in white blood cells, or by specific molecular testing (PCR) on a peripheral blood sample or splenic aspirate
- Most important finding in blood examination is thrombocytopenia, leucopenia, occasionally anaemia

### **Treatment**

- Treatment with doxycycline (10 mg/kg for 3 weeks in subclinical cases even 6 weeks) or other tetracyclines

### **Prevention**

- No vaccination available
- Aggressive tick control, e.g. use of parasiticide with repellent activity, such as (K9)Advantix<sup>®</sup> spot-on (combination of imidacloprid and permethrin)

### **Special Characteristics**

- *E. canis* does not cause disease in humans, but some of the less common *Ehrlichia* species found in the USA are zoonotic

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