

What in the World is *Brucella canis*?

Funny you should ask me that. Funnier still you should ask the way that you did. I'm proud to announce that I, Dr. Mary Sebzda, and Dr. Lin Kauffman, DVM, co-authored a paper published in *Veterinary Clinics of North America: Small Animal Practice* Vol 53:5. Our paper focuses on the worldwide emerging problem that an old, and less considered pathogen can pose.

Brucella is a genus of bacteria that have a global impact. While *Brucella canis*, the type mainly found in dogs, has enjoyed a fairly low prevalence in North America, the global movement of animals for rescue purposes as well as enhancement of genetic options in breeding dogs, is of concern right now.

The bacteria in short, is a clever organism that uses its host's (dog) innate immune system to avoid destruction and remain undetected for long periods of time, while chronically and intermittently being shed in various secretions. Mostly those using the combined urogenital system. While spaying and neutering can reduce some transmission, it does not prevent all and even spayed and neutered dogs can shed the bacteria in new environments exposing both naïve populations of dogs and their owners. Yes. *Brucella canis* is also potentially infectious to humans. Especially those in close contact with dogs that could have been infected previously.

While I don't want to be an alarmist, I think our recent experiences with COVID have taught us that screening and detection are key to prevention and better overall response to pathogens. The problem is that we have fewer and fewer methods for screening dogs that are used for breeding and dogs that are imported internationally. The common table side B.canis test kits that practitioners like myself relied upon to quickly screen breeding pairs, or screen a dog imported from outside the United States with little to no medical history, are no longer being manufactured.

If this little blurb interest you further, please read further: *Vet Clin Small Anim* 53 (2023) 1047-1062
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Or please forward your questions to doctors@newportharborvets.com attn.: Dr. M Sebzda, DVM, DACT

For now, I'd like to comfort you by stating that we still screen our breeding populations of dogs. In fact it is mandatory to have B.canis screening done prior to TCI (transcervical insemination) here at Newport Harbor Animal Hospital. If you own a breeding dog(s), please be advised we recommend you screen your dog every 6 months and with plenty of time prior to TCI (our tests are sent to Cornell AHDC and can take up to 7 days for result).