**Chronic diarrhoea(lasting over a period of more than 3 weeks)**

This information sheet is designed to give a brief overview of how we manage chronic diarrhoea in dogs so that you can see how we may progress the diagnosis and treatment of this condition.

1. **Common causes**

• Diet: unsuitable, high or low in certain nutrients, contains ingredients that the animal is sensitive to-can develop over time.

• Parasites: worms as well as unicellular organisms like Giardia, Isospora

• Infections: effecting directly the GI tract or other organs related to digestion(bacterial, viral, fungal)

• Inflammation: either through direct irritation or as a reaction -eg food intolerance, or autoimmune disease

• Lack of Vitamin B12

• Disturbance of the normal gut bacterial flora

• underlying other diseases: liver, pancreas, kidney or hormonal problem

• Loss of protein through the gastrointestinal tract

• Tumour/cancer of the GI tract

1. **Investigation**

• blood and urinalysis- General health profile and haematology to start with, more specific blood tests to detect pancreatitis, pancreas insufficiency-reduced capability to produce digestive enzymes, checking for vitamin b12(Cobalamine) and Folate levels. Can be used to check for hormonal problems.

• Faecal testing: parasites, certain infections

• Ultrasound: changes in the structure of the bowels/stomach can suggest various diseases, can detect problems in pancreas, liver, lymph nodes and adrenal glands as well.

• Biopsies: to obtain samples of the stomach/bowel/liver or pancreas, either directly or through an endoscopic examination.

1. **Treatment options**: depending on the underlying cause, or based on experience, often in combination

• DIET: mostly using special Hydrolised or gastrointestinal diets. ( will take a change over period of 7-10 days, followed by a minimum of 8 weeks of exclusive feeding of the diet to see full results. If successful can continue lifelong- balanced complete diets. Or until problem completely resolved.

• Antiparasite treatment: Sometimes with special active ingredients, over a period of time, or repeated frequently as required.

• Supplements: using pre- and probiotics, fiber, absorbing agents

• Cobalamine (Vitamin B12)

• Antibiotics: mostly in confirmed cases of bacterial infections or suspected bacterial problems usually 2-4 week period.

• Steroids: has general anti-inflammatory effect and can be successfully used in certain cases, over a period of time, usually in a slowly reducing dose. NOT TO BE USED if option for investigation. At least 3 weeks steroid free period before biopsies. Long term use can have side effect