



## NEOSPOROSIS

### ABOUT THE DISEASE

**Neospora caninum** is a single-cell organism (protozoa) that causes a disease called **neosporosis**. It resembles *Toxoplasma gondii*, which primarily affects cattle and likely canine patients. Please see the [Toxoplasmosis](#) document for additional information. However, the life cycle of **Neospora caninum** is not as widely known.

Protozoal infections in canine and feline patients can be classified into two main categories:

- Enteric – Those that primarily infect the intestinal tract
  - o These are typically cases of coccidiosis and giardiasis
- Multisystemic – Those that can spread throughout the body
  - o These are typically cases of toxoplasmosis and **neosporosis**

In cattle, **neosporosis** has the greatest impact as it can cause abortion. For this reason, preventing contamination of cattle feed and water with canine feces is imperative.

In canine patients, **neosporosis** most often causes disease within the nervous and muscular systems which may include ascending paralysis, stiffness, muscle atrophy, muscle contraction, or difficulty swallowing. In less common cases, it can cause abnormal/irregular heart rhythm (arrhythmia), pneumonia, ulcerative skin lesions, internal eye infections, liver inflammation (hepatitis), and sometimes pancreatic inflammation (pancreatitis).

### OBTAINING A DIAGNOSIS

Blood serum testing is the most dependable, but biopsies of infected tissues may also be beneficial.

### TREATMENT

Reliable treatment has not been identified, but similar treatment to toxoplasmosis has been effective.

### TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- **Neosporosis** should be considered in any acute (sudden) neuromuscular disease seen in at-risk canine patients.
- Keep a clean environment to reduce both canine and cattle patient risk.