

Diarrhea Fact Sheet



Diarrhea is a common and costly problem that can affect goat and sheep of all ages. Diarrhea is a gastrointestinal problem in which the feces of animal become soft and watery, sometimes stained with blood or mucus. It has many different causes. As well as causing deaths, animals that survive diarrhea can also experience reduced immunity and growth rates.

What signs are shown by animals affected by diarrhea?

The feces changes from dark firm pea like pellet to soft paste and don't drop away cleanly from the body of animal and accumulate around the anus and on rear legs and form dag. When diarrhea progresses, it becomes runny, watery or it contain mucus and in the worst type of diarrhea it become blood-stained. Although animals can naturally develop soft feces when eating lush green feed, diarrhea caused by a disease tends to cause weight loss, decreased appetite, lethargy or depression, or fever. Check the below table for specific signs

How do animals get diarrhea?

Goats or sheep can develop diarrhea from any of the following:

- **Parasitic worm infections:** 'Worms' are microscopic parasites that are transmitted between animals grazing the same pastures. Pastures can be infectious for many months, especially in cooler and/or wetter weather. Small numbers of worms do not cause harm, but large infections especially in young or breeding animals cause severe diarrhoea and disease. Goats or sheep can be infected by worms from other goats, sheep, cattle or camels
- **Infections due to germs:** Goats or sheep can be infected by germs in contaminated feed or water. Healthy animals can naturally carry germs without harm unless they become stressed due to inadequate feed consumption, transport or sudden changes in feeding
- **Sudden changes in feed,** including rapid increases of lush, green feed, starchy feeds like wheat or barley, or consuming certain plants can cause diarrhoea



How diarrhea is diagnosed?

- The cause of diarrhea must be accurately diagnosed so the correct treatment is used: this may be done using local knowledge of common causes of diarrhea in animals of different ages or different management situations.
- If animals do not respond as expected to treatment, a veterinarian or animal health worker may examine the animal, or take faecal and/or blood samples to look for worm eggs or germs in the faeces.



Common causes & treatments of diarrhoea

- Common treatments are summarized in the table below. Make sure animals receive the correct dose and duration of treatments




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- Give young animals with severe diarrhoea supplementary fluid by gently drenching them orally 1 cup of water four times daily
- Provide shade, fresh water and feed if animal is lying down
- Clean the back of animal to prevent blowfly infestation
- If diarrhea persists consult with your local veterinarian

Prevention & biosecurity

- Dirty housing and pens can spread infection. Keeping these areas clean is important.
- Ensure newborn animals consume colostrum straight away for good immunity to infections
- Never change suddenly from one type of feed to another. Gradually introduce new feed over 4-7 days.
- Start feeding **starchy grains** (e.g. wheat, barley, rice) first at 50 g per head per day, then gradually increase to the desired quantity over two weeks
- Isolate animals with diarrhoea from the rest of the herd until they are better. A sick kid or lambs should be kept separate from the rest of their herd with their mother.
- Some germs that cause diarrhoea in small ruminants infect humans, so wash hands, feet and footwear thoroughly with soap and water after handling or treating affected animals

Stock class	Type of diarrhea	Typical cause	Treatment	Risks for infection	Picture
Young kid/lamb mainly kept at home	Profuse watery liquid, smelly and green	Intestinal infection by bacteria or coccidia	<u>Scour-X liquid or similar:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 mL per 10 kg liveweight TWICE daily for 3 days 	Animals kept in unsanitary conditions: infrequent pen cleaning, insufficient space for number of animals, mixing older and younger animals	
Grazing kids or adults	Diarrhoea is usually less smelly, but dark and semi-liquid	Parasitic worms	Antiparasite/Anthelmintic given orally or by injection ONCE as needed; <u>choose ONE of**:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ivermectin 1% <u>subcutaneous injection:</u> 0.4 mL (goats) OR 0.2 mL (sheep) • Levamisole <u>orally:</u> 1.5 mL (goats) OR 1 mL (sheep) • Albendazole <u>orally:</u> 4 mL (goats) OR 2 mL (sheep) ** ALL DOSES ARE PER 10 KG BODYWEIGHT	Grazing short pasture, areas with high stocking densities and/or areas previously grazed by animals with diarrhoea	