

## Dog owners: be aware of salmon disease - Tillamook Headlight-Herald: News

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Visitors to United Paws country, a.k.a. Tillamook County, may not be aware of a possibly fatal disease dogs can pick up from fresh water fish, including salmon.

If your dog shows any of the following signs 5-7 days after having fun on the beach or splashing through our forest streams, get him or her to a veterinarian immediately: high temperature, lethargy, loss of appetite, vomiting, diarrhea. If you catch the disease in time, antibiotic therapy will suffice. If the disease is allowed to progress, the dog will require hospitalization and intravenous antibiotics. If you do nothing, your dog will probably die.

Salmon disease, often called salmon poisoning, is caused by a microorganism that lives in freshwater fish, not just salmon. If a dog comes into contact with an infected raw fish (eating the fish or merely licking the blood where the fish has been), the dog could get the disease. However, don't panic if you see your dog rolling around on a dead fish--not all fish carry the disease. Salmon disease occurs on the western slopes of the Cascades and stretches from San Francisco to Alaska. There is no vaccination for it.

A United Paws volunteer's dog contracted the disease shortly after the family moved to Tillamook County, yet the volunteer had never heard of the disease. The first she realized something was wrong was the dog panting wildly. Because this happened around midnight, she phoned the emergency vet on call, who told her to bring the dog in straight away. Of course, it was a dark and stormy night and there was a power-out, so the 25-mile drive was hair-raising. The vet felt the dog's lymph nodes, which were swollen, a sign of salmon disease, and administered an injection of antibiotics. The dog made a full recovery and, because the volunteer had noticed the symptoms early enough, didn't require hospitalization.

The volunteer hadn't seen her dog anywhere near a dead fish, but he loved to wade into cool streams in the forest and drink the ice-cold water - could he have slurped up a drop of infected blood as it floated out to sea?

United Paws is Tillamook County's only 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to alleviating and preventing animal suffering as a result of homeless through spay, neuter, and foster programs. United Paws relies on donations, fundraisers, grants, and bequests; please send donations to United Paws, PO Box 159, Tillamook, Oregon 97141, or via PayPal at the website [unitedpaws.org](http://unitedpaws.org).