

Guinea Pig Cries While Pooping

What would make a guinea pig cry when it defecates?

By Karen Rosenthal, DVM, DABVP

Posted: July 27, 2009, 4:15 p.m. EDT

Q: My guinea pig Rosie is female and approximately 11 months old. We have had her for 10 months, and almost straightaway she cried when pooping. At times her poop is very soft but not runny. It smells bad but not terrible and does not look black. Other times it looks like very big pellets that can be coated with blood. I have taken her to the veterinarian many times, and he is very helpful but admits he is not an expert with cavy's, and I can't find one in my area.

We feed Rosie dry pellets. She did have a muesli-type mix, but we took her off that. She also eats hay with added dandelion and vitamin C. We feed her a small amount of fresh food each day — a piece of carrot, cucumber and some cabbage, usually curly kale. She sometimes gets a treat of a piece of apple or grape.

We have tried feeding her only dry food, but that didn't seem to make any difference.

The veterinarian took X-rays and ultrasound under anesthesia and found nothing apart from dark cloudy areas on her scan that he said were unusually high amounts of trapped air (wind/gas).

Our guinea pig seems very bloated when having these bad spells and crunches up when she poops and cries as though she is straining.

She still eats well and drinks well during these episodes and actually still runs about and seems quite happy, but I feel sad for her. I don't know what to do or if there is anything else to do.

The veterinarian has me give her baytril during these episodes (0.2 ml twice a day), and I also give her a probiotic solution in her water.

What can I do to help her? Have you ever seen this problem? Am I doing something wrong?

I have another guinea pig named Boggle that is healthy and has never had any problems, so I can only assume their diet is OK, right?

A: I suggest getting a second opinion. Your veterinarian can ask for one through online veterinary services or you can contact a local guinea pig group and see if they have suggestions for another veterinarian. It sounds like your veterinarian has tried very hard to help, but sometimes a second set of eyes looking at the problem in a different way might help.

The most important part of your history is the fact that some pellets are covered in blood. That is very, very unusual. That means some part of the intestinal tract, close to the rectum, is bleeding. That is very unusual in guinea pigs. It is unlikely this is diet-related.

Different types of intestinal parasites can cause what you are seeing and some simple stool tests can be used to check for these parasites. If parasites are not the problem, then this becomes much more complicated.

Blood tests such as a complete blood count and biochemistry profiles should be done to check for bleeding disorders. It could even be necessary to place an endoscope into the intestine to look for a cause of what you are seeing. Conditions such as ulcers and even tumors can do this, although both would be extremely rare in guinea pigs in that part of the intestinal tract.

See all of Dr. Rosenthal's Critter Q&A articles>>