# Common Signs of Illness

## Dogs

- **Diarrhea**
  If your dog has persistent constipation that lasts for longer than 48 hours or there are any differences in the poo such as the presence of blood or mucus, it is recommended to visit your vet. If possible, bring a sample.

- **Vomiting, Gagging**
  Persistent sickness or choking when eating is a concern. Vomiting can be a sign of a developing allergy or a more serious infection, particularly in older dogs.

- **Sneezing, Coughing, Runny Nose**
  Sneezing, panting, runny eyes and nose or flu-like symptoms may be signs of respiratory problems, as are gasping or shortness of breath.

- **Refusal to Eat**
  For a range of reasons, your dog’s eating patterns may occasionally become irregular. But if your dog refuses food for a day or more, consult your vet.

- **Red or Swollen Gums**
  Reddened or swollen gums, particularly when associated with bad breath, are an indication of gum disease. When severe, dogs may lose teeth, drop food from their mouths and suffer weight loss due to difficulty eating.

## Cats

- **Dehydration**
  Dehydration is a common problem in cats that are not well. To see if your cat is dehydrated, gently grasp her skin near her shoulder blades, then let go. If the skin remains "tented", then your cat is dehydrated.

- **Low Energy Levels**
  As a general rule, cats that are sick will have lower energy levels. The only thing you may notice is that your cat sleeps more, does not play as much, or is restless.

- **Unkept Coat**
  Cats that are not feeling well do not tend to groom themselves very well. Therefore, you will usually see a messy or greasy coat, mats of fur, or clumps of loose hair. In some cases, you will see a difference in the coat’s shine or an increased amount of dandruff.

- **Change in Appetite**
  Since sick cats may eat less or eat more, or may have more or less thirst than usual, any change in appetite or thirst may be of concern. If your cat has not eaten properly for 24 hours, seek immediate veterinary attention.

- **Litterbox Changes**
  Both diarrhea and constipation are indicators of disease in cats. Diarrhea is usually easy to recognize in the litterbox, but constipation can be more problematic to notice. Small, hard, dry stools are never normal and are often an early indication of kidney disease.