

## Overview

*Haemonchus contortus*, commonly known as barber's pole, is a blood-sucking parasite which is found in the stomach of sheep, goats and alpacas. It reproduces very quickly and produces thousands of eggs per day. Barber's pole is the only worm that will drink the blood of your animal, and as a result can lead to death in just a few days. Whilst lambs, goat kids and crias are most susceptible to infection, high worm burdens can also cause deaths in adult animals.

Barber's pole thrives in the warm, wet months between January and April. In ideal conditions, this parasite can complete a life cycle in just 10-14 days and, subsequently, drenches which are specific, and have persistent activity, are recommended.

## Causes and Symptoms

Barber's pole does not cause scouring, so sudden death may be the first and only sign of infection.

You may notice the animal appears weak, lethargic and may separate itself from the rest of the flock.

Affected animals are usually anaemic so you may notice the normally pink gums are pale or even white. If severely anaemic and life-threatening, a blood transfusion may be required. They may also have "bottle jaw" (swelling below the jaw caused by fluid accumulation).



Pale Gums



# SHEEP, GOATS & ALPACA: A GUIDE TO Barber's Pole

## Management/ Prevention/ Treatment

Since this parasite is life threatening, causing sudden illness, prevention is always better than cure.

A Barber's Pole drench is the preferred oral drench recommended to both prevent infection and treat actively infected animals. This product has persistent activity lasting 42 days.

A triple oral drench can also be used; however, this drench lacks persistent activity and therefore animals which are actively infected with barber's pole will require drenching with a triple drench every 2 weeks to control disease.

If you are unsure which drenching programme to use on your lifestyle block, then please call your vet to discuss further.

Always remember to check the meat holding periods, if treating lambs for slaughter.



"Bottle jaw"

## When to call us

- If your animal seems lethargic, weak, separated from the flock, or lying down more than usual
- If you notice the gums and eyes are pale
- For all your preventative drenching needs, help and advice.



"Barber's Pole"

\*Updated Nov 25