



SEASONAL PAW PRINT

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GDV

Gastric dilatation-volvulus (GDV) also known as bloat, is a serious health risk, understanding the signs and the need for prompt treatment will help reduce the risk of mortality if your dog develops this problem. Bloat is an extremely serious condition, and is considered a life-threatening emergency. There are no home remedies for this condition, so you must contact your vet immediately if you suspect that your dog has bloat.

What is Bloat?

The gastric dilatation is one part of the condition and the volvulus is the second part.

In bloat (dilatation), the stomach fills up with air and puts pressure on the other organs and diaphragm. The pressure on the diaphragm makes it difficult for the dog to breathe. The air-filled stomach also compresses large veins in the abdomen preventing blood flow.

Filled with air, the stomach can easily rotate on itself from 90° to 360° which cuts off blood supply. Once this rotation (volvulus) occurs and the blood supply is cut off, the stomach begins to die. From this point your dogs condition will begin to deteriorate rapidly.

In This Issue:

- GDV
- Poisonous Plants
- Compost
- Arthritis in Pets
- Helping Cats Get Along
- Red Eyes
- Adult Dog Temperament



Risk factors:

- Exercise after a large meal
- Feeding a large meal once daily
- Fast eating dogs and scavenging dogs
- Underweight dogs
- Fear at time of feeding (e.g. fear of kennel mates or owner)
- Elevated feeding bowls
- Season (summer)

Symptoms

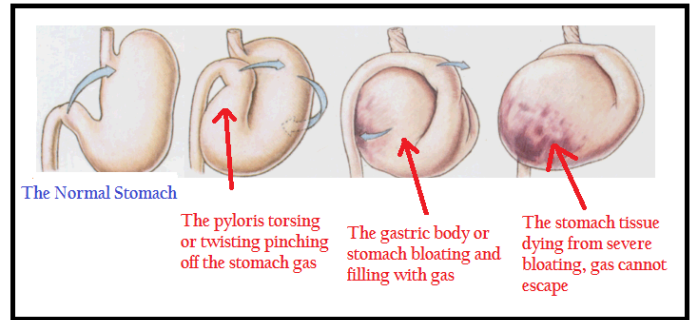
The list below is not exhaustive. If you are in any doubt, please call your vet immediately:

- Attempts to vomit (usually unsuccessful); may occur every 5-30 minutes - unsuccessful vomiting can sound like a repeated cough
- Doesn't act like usual self
- Exhibits significant anxiety and restlessness
- "Hunched up" appearance - hanging head
- Pacing in a stiff legged gait
- Bloated abdomen that may feel tight (like a drum) – in some cases the swollen abdomen is not apparent
- Pale or off-color gums - Dark red in early stages; white or blue in later stages
- Heavy salivating or dribbling
- Unproductive attempts to defecate
- May refuse to lie down or even sit down
- Whining
- Drinking excessively
- Heavy or rapid panting

- Apparent weakness; unable to stand or has a spread-legged stance
- Collapse

Prevention:

- Do not exercise for at least an hour (longer if possible) before and especially after eating
- Do not permit rapid eating
- Feed 2 or 3 meals daily, instead of just one
- Promote "friendly" bacteria in the intestine, e.g. from "probiotics" which is said to avoid fermentation of carbohydrates, which can cause gas to develop quickly. This is especially a concern when antibiotics are given since antibiotics tend to reduce levels of "friendly" bacteria. (Note: Probiotics should be given at least 2-4 hours apart from antibiotics so they won't be destroyed.)
- Do not permit excessive, rapid drinking



If you suspect your dog to be suffering from GDV / bloat / twisted stomach, ring us at the clinic immediately!



Poisonous Plants

Many households contain a variety of plants both inside and out of which owners are often unaware are poisonous to dogs. There are over 700 types of plants that can harm dogs if consumed, with symptoms ranging from dermatitis and salivation to vomiting, diarrhoea, lack of coordination, seizures, coma, liver or kidney damage and death. Some of the more common plants that may be found in and around households include Aloe Vera, Agapanthus, Azalea, Cactus, Rhododendron, Daphne, Foxglove, Begonia, Potato, Rhubarb, Tomato plant's, Chrysanthemum's, Daffodil's, Ivy, Tulips, Peonies, Yew, and also Fungi and Mushrooms which will grow wild in suitable outdoor environments.

Some dogs naturally like to eat vegetation and most dog owners will have seen one picking at grass from time to time which is suitably normal behavior in itself; it is when other plant types are consumed that the damage can occur. Usually if your dog does not commonly indulge in vegetation you will have little issues with potential poisoning from plants, but it is up to the individual to assess the potential hazards and reduce the risk of their dog coming into contact with toxic plants if they wish to keep both in the same environment. This goes for bulbs as well such as lilies, as even if the vegetation is not present, a dog that digs for example can easily come into contact with the tuber and may digest parts by licking it off their paws, or chewing at dirt and accidentally the bulb too.

Plants which produce berries can be a tempting treat as most humans know, but even the likes of grapes and raisins, which are readily available and very sweet and tasty, can cause ataxia, vomiting, trembling, seizures and liver damage in dogs, so it always pays to be careful even if the plant item is favorable and easily digested by humans! One should never assume it is the same for the dog, even though your four legged friend may think it extremely delicious!

The best a responsible pet owner can do is research any plants before purchasing them or keeping them in their homes, as knowledge is the best tool in preventing an emergency visit to the vet or a deceased dog. If your dog shows any symptoms such as vomiting, diarrhea, agitation, discomfort, trembling or even dilated pupils it is important to get them to the vet immediately, as the sooner the dog is assessed the better chance of a successful outcome and a cheaper vet bill! Also, the longer any poisonous plant material is in the body, the more the dog will have digested and therefore the more harmful the encounter can be. If you see your dog eat a plant you think is poisonous, take a sample of the plant along with you to the vet if unable to immediately identify it as knowing the source of the poisoning is going to benefit greatly in the treatment received, which goes a long way in a potential life and death scenario.

Compost

While we all agree composting is a fantastic way to recycle our household scraps, not including dairy or meat products, we should be fencing our compost heaps off for the sake of our pets and wildlife. Backyard compost bins and areas where decaying matter is found have the potential to contain mycotoxins, which are extremely toxic to our pets.

Signs of poisoning include agitation, high temperature, panting, drooling and vomiting which can progress to serious neurological signs. Even small amounts can result in clinical signs with 30 minutes to several hours. Early treatment is crucial. If left untreated, the toxins can lead to seizures and death. (Any seizure that lasts long enough can kill a dog).

The tremors can cause a dogs temperature to increase. Not treating the problem is extremely risky.

There is no antidote for compost poisoning.

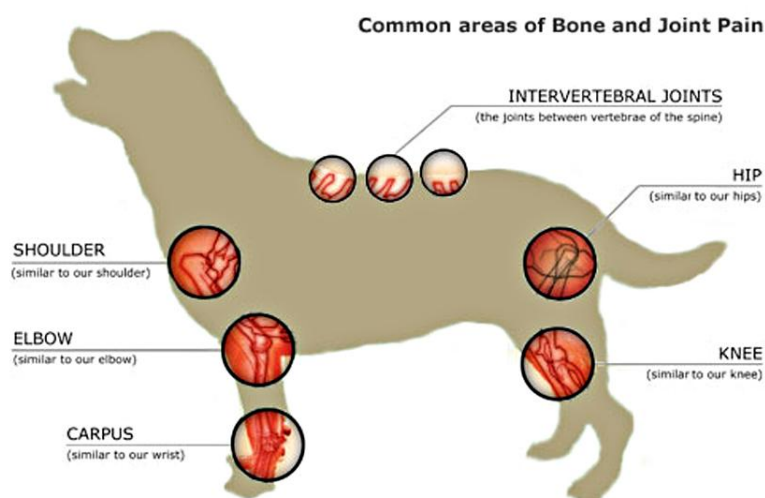
Hospitalisation, temperature regulation, IV fluids , IV muscle relaxants (to control tremoring), or anti seizure medication may be necessary.

Definitely a situation where prevention is better than cure , so make sure your compost heap is not accessible to your pet.

Arthritis Pain & your Pet

What is arthritis?

Arthritis, also known as Degenerative Joint Disease (DJD), is a breakdown of the protective cartilage and bone surrounding joints. The process begins with excessive motion in a joint that eventually leads to a wearing down of cartilage. As a result, inflammation develops within the joint, and movement becomes painful. These changes generally appear later in life but, if mechanical or hereditary defects are severe; signs can appear in younger pets.



How do I know if my dog or cat has arthritis?

Symptoms of arthritis may include joint pain, stiffness, tenderness at the site, a subtle or severe limp, and sometimes swelling, which can indicate fluid build-up. Your vet can discuss ways to assess the degree of arthritis, which may include careful palpation of the joints, lameness evaluation or radiographs (x-rays).

What can be done to treat my pet's arthritis?

Talk to your vet to learn which of the following treatment options may be best for your pet:

- Anti-inflammatory medications. These range from drugs with minimal adverse effects to those that need careful monitoring.
- Exercise. Avoid the "weekend warrior syndrome": regular healthy exercise can keep your pet fit and feeling good.
- Injections directly into the joint. These newer treatments range from steroid to stem cell injections.
- Low-level laser therapy and acupuncture. These alternative therapeutic options are not yet proven, but they show promise.
- Nutritional supplements. Supplements, such as omega fatty acids, glucosamine, chondroitin sulphates and methylsulphonylmethane (MSM) have become popular treatments for arthritis pain in pets.
- Pain Medication. Treating arthritis pain is important. The less pain in a joint, the more mobility there will be.
- Physical Therapy. Available to humans for many years, physical therapy is becoming more common in veterinary practice.
- Surgery. In certain cases, surgery can be of great benefit.
- Therapeutic foods. Some newer diets available from your vet contain supplements to treat arthritis.
- Weight Management. Keeping your pet's body weight in a healthy range lessens the strain on joints.



Feline Friends - How to help your Cats get Along

One problem that is sometimes hidden from the veterinarian, is how well the housemate cats are getting along. Cats rarely fight so bad that they need to come in for stitching up or other care due to the fight. In dogs that is a different story. But cats do a lot of hissing, yowling, chasing and running with loads of threats but fortunately few actual nasty attacks.

So, why do cats dislike each other? Really they do like each other. The problem is that the needs they have for space, food, water, and play are very different that dogs or humans. When

these needs are not met in the way the cat needs them to be met, trouble flares. It is not difficult to change the home around to help your cats, but it does need to happen. You will likely have to move a few collectables off the top shelf of a cabinet, or get a nice cat tree near the window for the cats. If you do not follow the suggestions - the fur will keep on flying and it may go into an all out brawl.

Cats are normally solo creatures out in the wild. Only lions really live in social groups and depend on each other for hunting and such. So our pet cats want to have their own beds, perching places, food dishes, and litter boxes. Every time you add a cat, you need to add each of these things. All of these extra items (resources) need to be placed a distance apart or not in view of the cats when in use. (about 6 feet apart from each other to have the cats feel like it is separate).

Using the space along the walls will greatly expand the space for the cats. Put shelves staggered along the walls going up so the cats can hop up and perch at different levels. This is like increasing the space by 2 or 3 times for the cats. A cat tree should have at least 3 shelves and one box or cubbie area for the cats. Some cats like to be hidden and low, others like to be out and up high. Watch and see where you cat is going - top of the fridge? Get a cat tower that is that high. Under the end table? Get a box or tube for the cat to hide and see out. This fills the need for a cat to have places to investigate, to rest solo and climb.

Cats want to play, but with something that is moving and looks like a bird or mouse to kill. Cats don't really "play" with each other much. They do some, but usually not until they have had time to swat, jump and try to kill a moving toy - usually one that a human is tossing or moving. So get a feather toy or real fur toy on a wand and tease your cat to try to catch and kill it. You are now filling this cat's need to kill something. Once that need is filled, they are often more calm and want to interact with another cat.

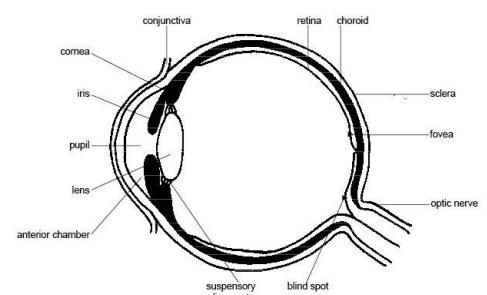
Separate feeding areas are also important. Cats rarely outwardly fight over food. If they are swatting or hissing, then they are really stressed over the sharing. Get a bowl per cat and position them so no one is looking at each other. It is best to feed the cats about 1/8 cup of food twice daily. Don't leave the food out. This can lead to fighting over the food, or over eating. Cat obesity is the leading reason for diabetes in the cat and other health problems.

Some cats have pain in the back or other places and use aggression to keep other cats away from them. Other cats bumping up to them, grooming them or rubbing up to them may hurt so the painful cat uses aggression to keep the others away. This is why it is so important if your cats that used to get along but are now grouchy to have a very complete and detailed exam for pain. Cats hide pain, and x-rays and other tests may be needed to check for common problems especially in our older cats.

Red Eyes – What Causes Them?

Eyes have several components, and many of them can become reddened when affected by disease. Parts of the eye that frequently become red are:

- Anterior chamber – fluid-filled space between the front of the iris and the cornea
- Fundus – the back of the eye that reflects light
- Iris – the colored part of the eye
- Cornea – the clear layer forming the front of the eye



- Conjunctiva – the membrane that covers the outer surfaces of the eyeballs and the inner surfaces of the eyelids
- Sclera/episclera – the white outer layer of the eyeballs

There is a myriad of potential causes for red eyes in dogs and cats. The first step in determining the potential cause(s) is having your veterinarian perform a complete physical examination on your fur baby. This evaluation includes an extensive examination of the eyes. Particularly helpful findings include:

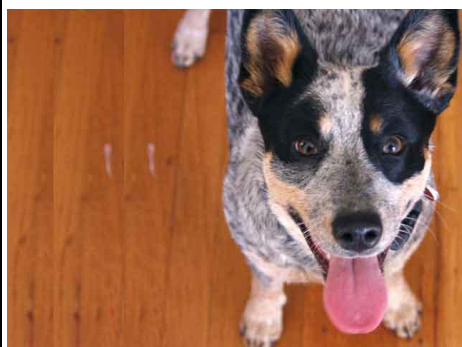
- Presence or absence of blepharospasm (involuntary closure of the eyelids)
- Presence or absence of discharge from the eyes
- The size of the pupils (holes in the center of the iris)

Diseases commonly associated with blepharospasm are:

- Corneal ulcers
- Anterior uveitis (inflammation in the anterior chamber of the eye)
- Acute glaucoma
- Acute lens luxation (dislocation of the lens into either the front or back of the eye)
- Acute keratoconjunctivitis sicca (dry eye)



Certain disorders cause the eyes to produce discharge. The nature of the discharge provides clues as to the cause of a patient's red eye(s). Similarly, various diseases cause the pupil of the eye to change size. The overall size provides clues as to the potential cause of a patient's red eye(s). Small pupils (called miotic pupils) are associated with anterior uveitis, while dilated pupils (called mydriatic pupils) are typically the result of chronic glaucoma, retinal and optic nerve disorders, and atrophy (shrinkage) of the iris.



How is an adult dog's temperament affected by treatment as a puppy?

A dog goes through several crucial development periods during their puppyhood which provide the foundations for their life as an adult canine. From birth through to approximately two weeks of age is the Neonatal phase, where a puppy is 100% dependant on its mother and main priorities are limited to feeding, sleeping and growing. The Transitional phase follows from around 3 weeks of age and is when puppies' eyes and ears open and some independence occurs. The socialisation phase then follows this from around the end of three weeks to sixteen weeks old. This is when a puppy becomes curious, begins forming social relationships, has full function of all senses, and learns about life in general.

There is a period around 8 to 9 weeks where a puppy may go from being outgoing and reckless to becoming cautious again. During this period, self confidence develops as does the ability to handle various situations, as long as "rescuing" does not occur too often by an over protective human! This whole socialisation period is crucial to how a puppy will develop mentally and behave as an adult. If a puppy experienced zero human interaction, it would likely avoid human contact and be "aloof", fearful and cautious. If the puppy was mistreated by humans and handled roughly, punished or treated negatively in any way during this time, it would grow to be distrustful of humans, perhaps very anxious and fearful around them, or worse defensive and aggressive, having learnt and had reinforced that humans are not a good thing! If however, that puppy was handled regularly, treated kindly and positively during his puppy hood, he would feel confident in human company, be affectionate and generally a good canine citizen in the human world.

The same goes for other life experiences, which can be anything from loud noises, vehicles, other dogs and animals, being inside, left alone, kennels and trips to the vet. If any of the above were experienced negatively, you could expect as an adult fearful, anxious or aggressive behaviours when faced with these situations. If introduced gradually and positively, an adult would be confident in these situations, provided the experiences continued to be relatively consistent throughout the first year or the Juvenile phase. Up until sexual maturity, a dog continues to cement the foundations for life experiences, which depending on the encounters, provides either a confident, friendly and loyal companion, or a fearful, anxious and unbalanced individual.



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