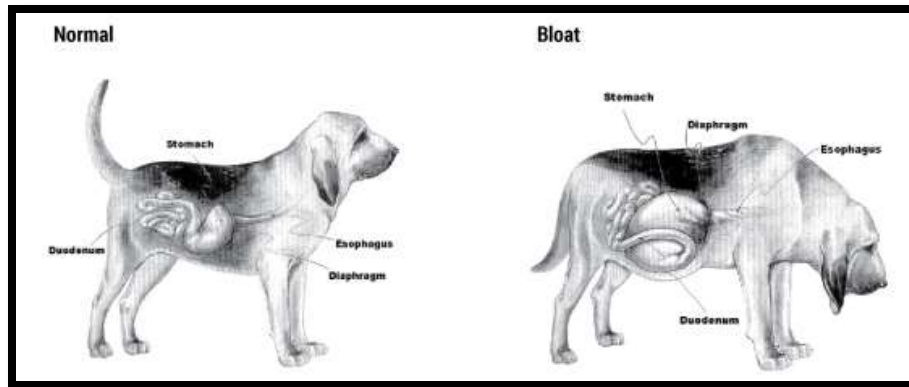


Gastric Dilatation-Volvulus

Gastric dilatation-volvulus is a very serious and life threatening conditions that needs to be corrected right away. Gastric Dilatation-Volvulus occurs when the stomach fills with gas and/ or food causing it to stretch to many times its size causing the stomach to twist onto itself. When this happens it is an emergency situation because the blood supply and oxygen is cut off to the stomach and the expanding stomach can compress the surrounding organs and blood vessels compromising them. While this condition is normally seen in large breed dogs with deep chest cavities, it can occur in deep chested dogs of any size.



Predisposed breeds

- ✓ Great Danes
- ✓ Saint Bernards
- ✓ Weimaraners
- ✓ Boxers
- ✓ Greyhounds
- ✓ Irish Setters
- ✓ Standard Poodles
- ✓ German Shepherd Dogs
- ✓ Doberman Pinschers



It is very important to remember that any dog can get Gastric Dilatation-Volvulus

Causes

While it is not know why exactly dogs get gastric dilatation-volvulus there are factors that can increase the risk factors:

- ✓ Feeding only one meal a day
- ✓ Dogs eating rapidly

- ✓ Moistening dry foods
- ✓ Feeding from an elevated food bowl
- ✓ Heavy exercise shortly after feeding
- ✓ Having a family history of gastric dilatation-volvulus
- ✓ Being thin or underweight
- ✓ Water restriction prior to or after meals
- ✓ Fearful or anxious temperament
- ✓ Older dogs are more prone
- ✓ Male dogs are more prone

Signs/ symptoms

The initial signs that can be seen include:

- ✓ Dogs that are anxious looking
- ✓ Dogs that are focusing on their abdomens more
- ✓ Standing and stretching
- ✓ Restlessness
- ✓ Drooling
- ✓ A distended abdomen
- ✓ Vomiting without producing anything

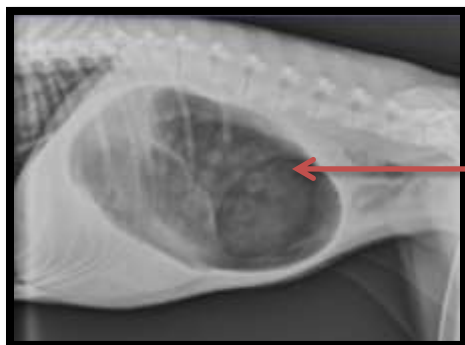
As the disease progresses you may see:

- ✓ Your dog panting more
- ✓ They may be weak
- ✓ They may suddenly collapse or unable to get up



Diagnostics

Your veterinarian will want to take abdominal x-rays to confirm that your dog has gastric dilatation-volvulus. On the x-rays a large stomach will be seen. They will also want to do bloodwork including a complete blood count, serum chemistries with electrolytes, and a urinalysis. These are used to evaluate the overall health of your dog and see if the Gastric Dilatation-Volvulus has affected organs. An EKG (electrocardiogram) will also be done to determine if cardiac arrhythmias are present, these can commonly be seen later in the disease process.



Gas and food in the stomach of a dog with gastric dilatation-volvulus





Gas in the stomach of a dog with gastric dilatation-volvulus



Treatment

The first thing that will be done is that your dog will be stabilized by giving them intravenous fluids, pain medications and oxygen. The stomach will be decompressed, meaning that the gas will be removed. There are two different ways this can happen. Either a tube can be passed down the esophagus or a needle can be placed into the stomach from outside the body to relieve the gas. Once your dog is stabilized your dog will have to undergo general anesthesia and have surgery to correct the gastric dilatation-volvulus. The surgery involves a full exploration of the abdomen and correction of the rotated stomach will be done. The surgeon will examine the stomach, the stomach wall, spleen and rest of the internal organs. If they feel that part of the stomach wall has been damaged due to poor blood flow to the area it will need to be removed. If the spleen shows signs of damage due to impaired blood circulation the surgeon may determine that it needs to be removed as well. Once the surgeon has corrected the gastric dilatation-volvulus they will permanently attach part of the stomach wall to the abdominal wall to prevent the stomach from twisting again. This is called a gastropexy.

After care and outcome

Most times your dog is hospitalized for several days. During this time they will receive IV fluids and antibiotics. They will also be monitored for cardiac arrhythmias and other post-surgical complications. Once your dog comes home there will be exercise restrictions and preventing your dog from jumping onto and off of things for 2 to 3 weeks. Also you will have to feed multiple small meals per day. The longer the duration between the gastric dilatation-volvulus and the corrective surgery, the higher the mortality rate becomes. Other factors that can affect the mortality rate include dogs that have pre-existing cardiac arrhythmias prior to the surgery, if a portion of the stomach has to be removed and if the spleen has to be removed.

Prevention

You can have a preventative gastropexy done on your dog when they are younger if that are an at risk breed of dog. This is commonly done at the time of their spay or neuter procedure. Feeding your dog two smaller meals will also decrease the risk of gastric dilatation-volvulus. Also you can help slow down your dog when they are eating by using maze bowls where they have to work to get to their food. It is important to know that your dog can bloat again even with a gastropexy, however the stomach will not twist onto itself again. If your dog



seems bloated it is important that you seek medical attention right away even if they do have a gastropexy.

If you have any questions or concerns about gastric dilatation-volvulus please feel free to call Cedar Grove Veterinary Services at (920) 668-6212 or email us at info@cgvet.com. If you feel that your pet has a gastric dilatation-volvulus contact your veterinarian right away or call an emergency clinic closest to you.

