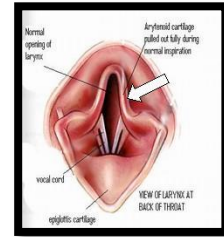


Laryngeal Paralysis

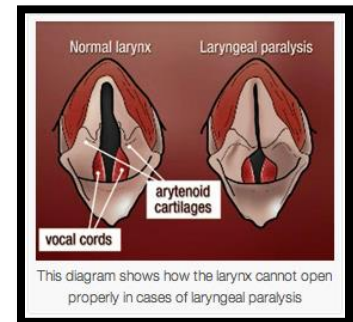
The larynx, more commonly known as the voice box, has several different functions. Not only is the larynx where sound comes from when we speak or an animal barks, meows, or cries, but more importantly the larynx also closes off the respiratory tract while eating and drinking. This ensures that food and liquids are not inhaled. The larynx also expands to allow air in when a breath is taken.



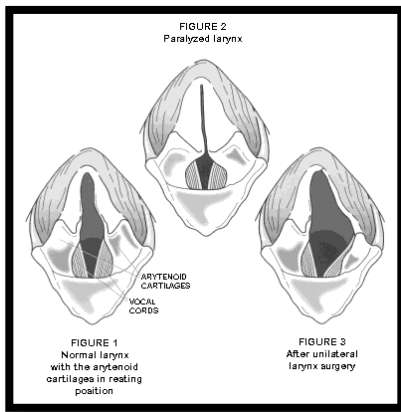
Laryngeal paralysis occurs when the muscles of the larynx cannot or do not work properly, which means that the larynx cannot fully open to allow a deep breath to occur. When this occurs the flaps of the larynx flop weakly and flaccidly. This means that the animal tries to take a deep breath but is unable to get one. At this point the animal can start to get anxious which then leads to more rapid breathing creating more distress. Laryngeal paralysis most commonly affects older large breed dogs, such as Labrador Retrievers and Golden Retrievers. There are some breeds, such as the Bouvier des Flanders and Dalmatian that can have a hereditary form that can affect young dogs. It has also been seen in cats although it is not as common.



Laryngeal paralysis does not come on suddenly, most of the time the dog will have a fairly long history of panting, tiring easily on walks and loud breathing. Other signs that may be noticed include voice changing and gasping. These signs can be worse in hot or humid weather, during exercise and if the dog is overweight. Laryngeal paralysis becomes a medical emergency when the dog tries to take a deep breath and can't, causing more anxiety and rapid breathing. The folds of the larynx can then swell making the obstruction in the throat worse. To overcome the crisis the dog would need to be sedated and possibly intubated which will allow the dog to breathe better. At this time it is still unknown what causes laryngeal paralysis in older dogs but we do know that dogs with Laryngeal paralysis are 21 times more likely to develop a condition called megaesophagus.



To determine if your dog has laryngeal paralysis your doctor would examine their larynx directly. In order to do this the dog would be sedated. This level of sedation needs to be deep enough that the doctor can visualize the larynx but shallow enough that the dog can take deep breaths. Your veterinarian may also want to take x-rays of your dog's chest to ensure that they have not inhaled food material creating aspiration pneumonia. They would also likely do bloodwork to ensure that the dog is healthy overall.



The only way to fix laryngeal paralysis is through surgery. There are several different types of surgeries that can be done but the goal of each of them is to relieve the obstruction on the airway while still maintaining the function of the larynx. To determine which type of surgery is best for your dog talk with your veterinarian or the veterinary specialist that your veterinarian refers you to.

For information about Laryngeal Paralysis feel free to call us at (920) 668-6212 or email us at info@cgvet.com. Also check out

<http://www.veterinarypartner.com/Content.plx?P=A&S=0&C=0&A=2331> for more information on laryngeal paralysis.