



GASTRIC DILATATION & VOLVULUS DISCHARGE (Bloat)

What is GDV?

Gastric dilatation and volvulus (GDV) or “bloat” is a condition where the stomach becomes distended with food, air or water and then twists over, blocking the exits to the stomach. The esophagus and the small intestine are closed off preventing evacuation of the contents.

It happens mainly in large, deep chested dogs, like the great Dane, Doberman pincher, standard poodle, Irish Setter, German Shepherd, and Saint Bernard. It can occur in any size dog, and rarely in cats.

Why Does This Make My Dog So Sick?

The twisted stomach can interfere with circulation by closing off the blood vessels of the stomach and spleen and putting great pressure on the liver and its blood supply. This rapidly leads to deep shock and death. Often these dogs develop widespread microscopic blood clots throughout their body as well (DIC).

This condition is a true emergency and requires a combination of medicine and surgery or the dog will be lost.

What Caused it to Happen?

The true cause is unknown. Many factors are involved: the deep chest of the dogs usually affected; excessive swallowing of air; gulping food; gulping water; delayed emptying of the stomach; overeating; or exercising too soon after eating or drinking. Some researchers are looking at specific parts of the diet that may have an impact and certain bacteria that live in the digestive tract.

What Signs Give a Warning of GDV?

The symptoms begin within six hours of eating or drinking. The dog may be quieter than normal or just the opposite—very restless, panting, and unable to get comfortable. There may be excessive belching or flatulence (gas). It may drool saliva or unsuccessfully attempt to vomit. The abdomen may be distended and tight. The dog may cry and appear uncomfortable. As

shock progresses, the dog will become weaker and have difficulty breathing. Death rapidly follows.

How is It Treated?

THIS IS AN EMERGENCY! Treatment consists of immediate reversal of shock and blood stagnation with intravenous fluids and medications. The heart must be monitored as it is quite sensitive to toxicities and electrolyte imbalances. The heart may require medicines to stabilize it. The stomach will be emptied by stomach tube if one can pass the twisted esophagus.

If the esophagus is twisted too tightly, then a needle is passed through the abdominal wall and into to stomach to relieve the pressure. Antibiotics are also administered. As soon as the dog is stable, surgery is performed. The process reverses the twist and attaches the stomach to the wall of the abdomen so it can't flip over again. Sometimes the spleen will have to be removed too.

After surgery the patient will require constant hospital care and monitoring for at least 36 to 48 hours. Heart irregularities are common during this period and will require electrocardiogram (ECG or EKG) monitoring and medications. The first food is offered 12-24 hours after the surgery, and if all goes well it can go on home care as soon as the heart is stable and all indications are that it is “on the mend.”

What Will I Need to Do at Home?

Keep your pet strictly confined and resting. Follow the home care instructions.

Call Us or Your Regular Veterinarian If...

- Your dog appears weak or nauseated.
- Your dog vomits or attempts to vomit.
- Your dog's incision is bleeding, swollen or has a discharge.

Thank you for this opportunity to serve you!



INSTRUCTIONS following GDV Surgery

1. Restrict activity for _____ days. No strenuous exercise and no jumping for two weeks.
2. Do not allow your dog to lick or scratch at the abdominal incision. An Elizabethan collar may be needed on some dogs to prevent licking.
3. Watch the incision for discharge, swelling, or redness. Call your veterinarian, if any problems or questions arise.
4. Watch for any abdominal distension, vomiting, unproductive attempts to vomit (“dry heaves”), diarrhea, weakness, labored breathing, or any other abnormality. Seek immediate veterinary care if a problem occurs.
5. Feed ____ can(s) of I/d every _____ hours, for a total of _____ cans per day for _____ days. Then switch gradually back to regular diet over a 3-4 day period, fed in divided feedings two to three times daily.
6. Administer the dispensed medication as directed:
 - a) _____, _____ mg, #
 _____ Give: _____ tablets/capsules every _____ hours for _____ days.
 - b) _____, _____ mg, #
 _____ Give: _____ tablets/capsules every _____ hours for _____ days.
 - c) _____, _____ mg, #
 _____ Give: _____ tablets/capsules every _____ hours for _____ days.
 - d) _____, _____ mg, #
 _____ Give: _____ tablets/capsules every _____ hours for _____ days.

Other:

7. Do not administer Pepto-Bismol, Aspirin, Tylenol, Advil, or any medication without first consulting your veterinarian.
8. Have your dog reexamined if any problems develop.
9. Have your veterinarian reevaluate your dog and perform suture/staple removal in _____ days.
10. Please feel free to call us if you have questions or concerns.

Thank you for this opportunity to serve you!