



Canine Gastric-Dilation Volvulus (GDV)

Recently, Lanes Vets has had a few cases of Canine Gastric-Dilation Volvulus, also known as 'GDV'. This condition is an extremely serious emergency, and without treatment, can kill a dog in a matter of hours.

What is a GDV?

A GDV most often occurs a few hours after the dog has eaten. The condition is caused by the stomach twisting. The stomach is tied at both ends, much like a balloon. As the food is sitting within this 'balloon stomach', it begins to be digested. This gives off gas. Normally, the gas can escape. However, when the gas is locked in the 'balloon stomach', it causes the stomach to swell. This is 'bloat'. When the stomach twists, this is a true GDV.

Why does this happen?

Research into this condition shows that it usually occurs immediately after (up to 4 hours after) the dog has eaten. However, it can occur at almost any point of the day or night. No-one really knows the true reason as to why this condition occurs or why certain individuals are more susceptible.

Who is at risk?

In theory, this could happen to any dog. However, the majority of cases occur with 'deep chested dogs'. These breeds include (but are not limited to): Great Danes, Labradors, Retrievers, Weimaraners, setters and Boxers.

What are the signs?

- Your dog may begin panting and showing signs of restlessness. This is due to the build-up of gas making it difficult to find a comfortable resting position
- He/she may begin retching. Some vomit/froth may be produced but the majority of the retching will be unproductive.
- As the stomach fills with gas, you will be able to see the bloat effect in your dog's abdomen which shows just behind the ribcage.

- If the bloat is severe, this can impact on the dogs breathing. As the stomach struggles to find the space to expand, it pushes up against the diaphragm and into the chest cavity.
- Death is an inevitable outcome of this condition unless surgical intervention is performed. Even at this point, the dog can be ill and need lots of medication and support for weeks later.
- Despite quick response and good nursing, this condition still carries a lot of risk to the patient, including recurrence of the condition or infection.

How can I prevent this?

As we know that this condition often happens after eating, we advise that large dogs are fed a minimum of twice daily. This means that they get two smaller meals, rather than one bulky meal. Exercise after eating is a HUGE NO! As the stomach is full of food, exercise and excitement can contribute to this condition.

Many people prefer that dry biscuit diets are soaked with hot water, and allowed to cool before feeding to your dog. This makes the biscuits swell up in the bowl, instead of in your dog's stomach. This reduces gas production in your dog.

If you are, in any way, concerned for your pet's health, please do not hesitate to call us and remember time is critical when dealing with this type of emergency.

Lanes Vets Locations & Contact Information.

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