

Bloat in Dogs (Gastric Dilation and Volvulus)

What is GDV/Bloat?

Gastric dilation volvulus (GDV) also known as 'bloat' is a condition in which the stomach fills with air (dilation) and can twist on itself (volvulus). Once the stomach is twisted there is an increased pressure in the stomach, malpositioning of the stomach and reduced venous blood return to the heart which results in shock, collapse and death. It can occur quickly and be a very serious condition.

What causes GDV?

Is it still unknown what exactly causes GDV. There is no single factor responsible, but it is thought to be multifactorial. Some of the risk factors include:

- Large breed dogs
- Deep chested dogs
- Having a history of bloat in any of the dog's immediate relatives e.g. parents and siblings
- Eating one large meal a day of dry food
- Exercising after eating
- Eating quickly, or from an elevated position
- A fearful/nervous temperament
- Having a history of bloat in any of the dog's immediate relative

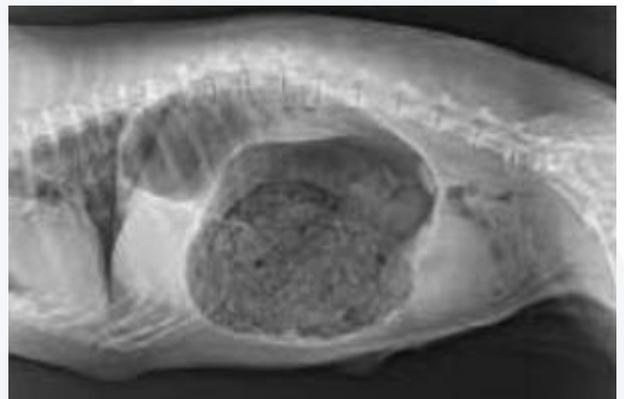
How do I know if my dog might have GDV?

Some of the clinical signs your dog may have bloat include:

- Unproductive retching/vomiting
- A distended/painful abdomen
- Excessive drooling
- Collapse
- Restlessness
- Difficulty breathing

How is GDV diagnosed at the vets?

If you think your dog may have bloat it is important to call or head straight to the vets as the condition is an emergency. Once at the vets your dog will quickly be assessed. An abdominal x-ray will give a diagnosis of GDV.





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What happens if GDV is diagnosed?

GDV is a medical and surgical emergency. Your dog may need to be stabilised and treated for shock with intravenous fluids. Generally, surgery is required to decompress the stomach and return it to its original position. During surgery the stomach and spleen are assessed as they may be damaged due to reduced blood flow to the organs. The stomach is then attached to the side of the abdominal wall (gastropexy) to reduce the chances of it twisting again.

What can I do to prevent GDV?

A gastropexy is a preventative surgery which can be performed in at risk dogs to prevent the stomach twisting on itself. This can be done as a routine procedure and some people choose to do it when their pet is desexed. If you have a large breed dog and are worried about the possibility of a GDV, discuss this with your veterinarian. A preventative gastropexy can be a life saving surgery. It should be considered in all at risk dogs.