

FACT SHEET

Gastric Torsion

Gastric torsion, gastric dilation, or bloat as it is often called, is a condition where the stomach becomes enlarged very quickly and fills up with liquid and gas, in extreme cases the stomach can rotate on itself, twisting and blocking the entry and exit of the stomach, this is a serious emergency situation and immediate veterinary treatment is essential.

The problem is mainly seen in dogs with deep chests such as Great Danes, Wolfhounds, Old English Sheepdogs and St Bernards though it can happen in any breed, especially if you have a dog that is inclined to bolt his food.

Symptoms

The symptom first seen is the stomach visibly enlarging as it fills with gas, it may also sound like a drum when patted. Often the dog will appear very distressed, excessively salivating and attempting to vomit with much discomfort and restlessness.

This is an emergency situation and should not be taken lightly.

Contact your local Veterinary Surgery immediately and transport your dog to your vet as quickly as possible. Emergency surgery may be required at this point to either untwist the stomach or perhaps just to release the gases via a stomach tube.

Prevention

The cause of this condition is unclear, although vets have found that in some cases it has been linked with the feeding of certain types of proprietary dog foods, such as dried foods that should be soaked in water before feeding. If this is not done the product will swell up in the stomach often causing this reaction. It may also be that some dogs swallow a lot of air when eating, especially with dried foods.

Feeding a natural, moist, meat-based diet such as Naturediet seems to be the best way to prevent the situation from occurring. Try to avoid excess excitement at mealtimes and feed two or three small meals rather than one large one to prevent your dog from bolting large quantities of food in one go.

Remove any competition during meal times: where there is more than one dog to feed, separate them into different rooms or contained areas so eating may be accomplished in peace and without fear of losing to the other animal.

If you have a large dog it is a good idea to feed from a height, place the food bowl on a chair or a small stool rather than the floor, this will help your dog to swallow food with greater ease, providing a clear passage to the stomach. Alternatively, another natural position is for them to lie down to eat: stuff their Naturediet meal into a 'Kong' (hollow rubber 'ball'), they will often lie down and have to lick the contents out slowly.

Never exercise straight after feeding, as this is likely to further aggravate the problem: digesting food takes a lot of energy and is best achieved in peace and quiet, ideally during a nap.

Treatment

Gastric torsion occurs very quickly and can be very frightening for both dog and owner. The condition can be relieved by emergency surgery. Unfortunately it is common that when this complaint has occurred once the dog may be prone to it happening again. Therefore great care should be taken both with the type of diet and the amount fed. Always keep a careful eye on your dog after eating a meal and do not let him scavenge in bins or livestock feed bags!

Early symptoms can be recognised quickly by owners of dogs who are prone to this condition. Sometimes homeopathic treatments can help to reduce susceptibility and prevent re-occurrence.

How can Naturediet help?

Our range of foods are naturally moist and as such do not swell or change in size once ingested; their firm consistency allows for easy consumption. It is easily stuffed into a 'Kong' to slow and alter the dog's eating habits.

Naturediet contains a source of dietary fibre that can help with the transit of food from the stomach to the small intestine; Naturediet Senior/Lite has the highest fibre level within the range.

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