

What Is Canine Bloat?



The topic of GDV (the canine bloat) is very real and frightening to any dog owner.

Although most dog lovers out there are fairly educated about the subject, I feel that we all need a refresher course once in a while.

Canine Bloat (Gastric Dilation or GDV) is a very dangerous disorder of the canine digestive system. Unfortunately the reasons behind this disorder seem to be somewhat puzzling and not so clear, but we have gathered some information about the disorder and the symptoms that may be helpful for all dog lovers.

We also touch on the subject of getting the proper medical help in case of an emergency and you will also find a few suggestions that may or may not be helpful in preventing bloat. We do follow all the suggestions provided here since our German Shepherd Mundo has a very sensitive digestive system.

Once again observation is the key element of course and we all must learn to read canine body language since they just cannot express themselves verbally.

What is Bloat "Gastric Dilation": The condition is rapidly fatal in dogs, causing shock, coma, and death within 6-12 hours. Always consult your dog's vet as he or she can take x-rays of the abdomen to confirm the diagnosis. It is characterized by stomach enlargement due to extreme gas and or dilation.

Dilation may follow by "volvulus" a twisting rotation of the stomach. This closes both the esophagus and pylorus preventing the dog's stomach from relieving gas by belching; it also blocks the food to advance into the intestines and stops the suffering dog from getting ride of the food by vomiting.

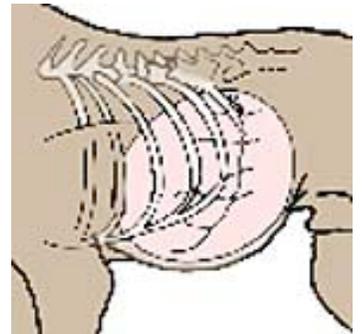
We have also found out that this twist compresses one of the major veins carrying blood to the heart and causes abnormal blood circulation through out the dog's body, which causes shock and death.

What are some of the bloat symptoms: Common symptoms of bloat are:

- * major anxiety
- * abdominal swelling after meals
- * gagging
- * whining
- * heavy salivating
- * pacing
- * dry vomiting
- * heavy panting
- * shallow breathing
- * restlessness
- * excessive heartbeat
- * weak pulse with off colored (blue, dark red, white) gums

What breeds are prone to bloat? Bloat seems to affect deep-chested, large or extra large dogs between the ages of 4 to 10 years.

- * **German Shepherd**
- * **Great Dane**
- * **Standard Poodle**
- * **Rottweiler**
- * **Akita**
- * **Bloodhound**
- * **Great Pyrenees**
- * **Irish Setter**
- * **Old English Sheepdog**
- * **Boxer**
- * **Golden Retriever**
- * **Irish Wolfhound**
- * **St. Bernards**
- * **Labrador Retriever**
- * **Newfoundland**
- * **Doberman**



Initially affected dogs show some of the symptoms above and are not interested in food or water. After 30-60 minutes the dog begins to appear swollen in its midsection due to accumulation of gas in the stomach than begin to pant heavily and breathing becomes rapid and shallow. Keep in mind that the gagging and vomiting is always unproductive.



What to do in case of an emergency: Dogs showing any of the above symptoms must be observed carefully and taken to a veterinarian immediately.

Some helpful suggestions: Below are some suggestions to decrease the chances of bloat.

These suggestions we follow for our boss dog Mundo (German Shepherd) may or may not help detecting or preventing canine bloat, but observation and being canine-connected will help you understand and help your loyal pooch!

- * Never feed your dog immediately before or after heavy work out or training session. We try to allow 2-3 hours of rest time after feeding our dogs.
- * Do not allow your dog to become overweight.
- * Be canine-connected and watch for odd symptoms, abdominal swelling, dry vomiting, strange gagging, extreme restlessness, etc.
- * Feed several small meals throughout the day instead of one large meal. Our German Shepherd Mundo gets 2 meals and a snack for lunch.
- * If you have a nervous dog, feed her/him in a quite relaxed atmosphere. Our poodle Cinnamon was pretty nervous during feeding, so we set her dish in the kitchen and left her alone during her meals.
- * If you plan on changing your dogs diet, start slowly please. Sudden diet changes will cause gastric problems. The adjustment period for Mundo (find out what Mundo eats) when we got her on a holistic diet was 2 months. She was extremely frail so this time frame was longer than usual. Please check with your vet when changing diets, a vet will be able to guide you better since he or she is familiar with your dogs physical and psychological make up.

What may cause Bloat? It is thought that the following factors may contribute to bloat, although there are no definite answers.

- * Eating Habits
- * Exercise
- * Stress
- * Heredity
- * Disposition



Immediately contact your dog's veterinarian in case you feel that your dog may have GDV. Please note that GDV is a **life-threatening emergency** and we urge you or anyone you know not to attempt home treatments, but seek professional help instead!

Be alert, use caution and ask your vet in case you have any doubts. You and your dog deserve to live a happy and healthy life. With a little understanding of dangerous illnesses such as the canine bloat, you are taking a step toward insuring your dog's future and health.

Stay healthy and happy...

Sevi Kay © 2000 Mundo L.L.C

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