

WHAT IS GASTRIC DILATATION AND VOLVULUS (GDV)?

GDV, or bloat, is a life-threatening condition where the stomach twists on itself. The result is that the stomach fills with air and can cut off blood supply to the stomach.

WHAT ARE SIGNS OF GDV?

GDV usually occurs in large dogs or breeds that have a deep chest. However, any pet is at risk for this condition. Common signs include retching or trying to vomit with nothing coming up, hypersalivating, or acting restless/uncomfortable. In some cases, owners can actually see the abdomen getting larger as the stomach fills with air.

GDV is different from a food bloat which can occur when a pet eats too much. However, since it is difficult to distinguish between these two conditions without a radiograph, any signs of GDV or abdominal distension should be evaluated by a veterinarian as soon as possible.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I THINK MY PET HAS GDV?

It is important to have your pet seen by a veterinarian as soon as possible if you think your pet has GDV. This condition requires **immediate** veterinary care.

HOW IS GDV TREATED?

Most patients are painful and in shock. Initial treatment will involve pain medication and IV fluids. Once your pet is more stable, the air from the stomach will be removed and radiographs will usually confirm the diagnosis. Emergency surgery is required to untwist the stomach. A surgical procedure known as a gastropexy will be done to “tack” the stomach to the body wall to prevent the stomach from twisting again. Usually, patients will stay under a veterinarian’s care to make sure they recover well from surgery.

CAN I PREVENT GDV IN MY PET?

There are several things that can be done to prevent GDV from occurring. Pets should be fed small meals throughout the day rather than one large meal. In addition, your pet should not be allowed to run around and exercise excessively right after eating. When the stomach is full, there is a greater chance for GDV.