

AVOIDING CANINE BLOAT

CANINE BLOAT (Gastric Dilation-Volvulus) is a digestive problem caused by the excessive swallowing of air while eating, gastrointestinal secretions, and gas from fermentation of food in the stomach. This is a LIFE-THREATENING EMERGENCY primarily found in large or giant, deep-chested dog breeds, but it also has been reported in smaller breeds such as the Dachshund and Basset Hound.

There are still many unanswered questions about this problem and a lot of research is currently investigating the problem.

The following recommendations are currently recommended:

1. Feed large dogs two or three times daily, rather than once a day, and at times when someone can observe after-feeding behavior.
2. Be alert for any actions from the dog that signal abdominal discomfort. These include: evidence of abdominal fullness after meals, whining, pacing, getting up and lying down, stretching, looking at the abdomen, anxiety, and unproductive attempts to vomit. Animals showing these signs should be examined by a veterinarian as soon as possible.
3. Establish a good working relationship with a veterinary hospital that offers 24 hour emergency service.
4. Make sure water is available to dogs at all times, but limit the amount immediately after feeding if the dog appears to over-consume.
5. Avoid vigorous exercise, excitement, and stress one hour before and two hours after meals. Walking is permissible as it may help to stimulate normal gastrointestinal function.
6. Diet changes should be made gradually over a period of 3 - 5 days.
7. Feed susceptible dogs individually and, if possible, in a quiet location.
8. Pay special attention to these procedures after animals return home from being elsewhere.
9. Dogs that have survived bloat are at increased risk for future episodes. Be sure to discuss preventive surgery or medical management with the veterinarian.