

# SEIZURES

**Seizures** (convulsions, fits, epilepsy) are commonly encountered in our household pets, but can be frightening, nonetheless. They can occur in cats and dogs of all ages and can be caused by **many** different problems. In general, seizures are caused by two major groups of problems:

## **I. PROBLEMS NOT ORIGINATING FROM THE BRAIN, SUCH AS:**

- A.** Poisons
- B.** Kidney Disease
- C.** Liver Disease
- D.** Heart Disease
- E.** Low Blood sugar
- F.** Nerve and Muscle Problems
- G.** Infections

## **II. PROBLEMS ORIGINATING IN THE BRAIN ITSELF, SUCH AS:**

- A.** True Epilepsy
- B.** Brain Infections (virus, bacteria, fungus)
- C.** Degenerative Conditions of Brain Tissue
- D.** Hydrocephalus (water on the brain)
- E.** Brain Tumors
- F.** Stroke-like Conditions and Blood Clots in the Brain

As you can see, a seizure is not a diagnosis in itself, but a sign of an underlying problem. After one such episode, it is usually difficult to tell if your pet will ever have another seizure or not, but your veterinarian will make some suggestions for looking into the problem. A thorough history-taking and physical examination will provide your doctor with quite a bit of information, but often some simple test procedures are needed to study your pet's problem more closely.

**These initial tests may include blood tests, urine analysis, and an electrocardiogram.**

The purpose of these tests is to tell whether the problem originates from other parts of the body (**Group I**) or from the brain (**Group II**). These are important to distinguish, as the prognosis and kinds of medication used for these diseases are different.

In most cases, we look for normal test results and through a process of elimination determine that the problem is in the brain. At this point, we may prescribe medication, or may recommend further tests. Many sophisticated human tests are performed in pets as well such as cerebrospinal fluid analysis, skull x-ray, electroencephalograms, brain scans with radioisotopes and x-ray dye-injection studies of the brain's blood supply. We will determine whether or not your pet requires further testing and will make the appropriate recommendations to you.

**The important point is to identify the seizure problem as closely and as early as possible so that appropriate therapeutic measures can be taken. There are literally thousands upon thousands of happy household pets that are epileptics, and many can lead long, normal lives.**

**If you have any questions regarding epilepsy in your pet, don't hesitate to ask us.**