

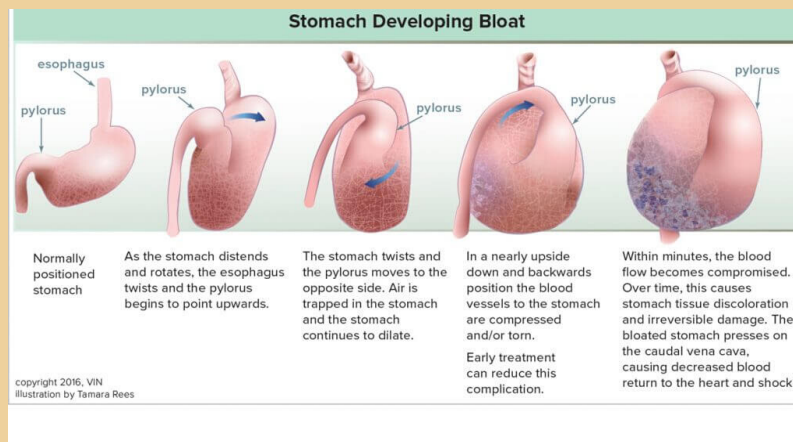


GASTRIC DILATION AND VOLVULUS (GDV) - AKA BLOAT

A TRUE VETERINARY EMERGENCY

What is Bloat?

- Bloat is a condition in dogs where the stomach fills with gas and fluid and stretches to many times its normal size (aka Gastric Dilation).
- The bloated stomach then twists on itself and prevents further fluid and gas from escaping (Volvulus) – this quickly leads to multiple life-threatening problems including damage to (ie death of) the stomach wall, damage to the spleen, irregular heartbeat, dangerously low blood pressure and a dangerously high heart rate.
- It is extremely painful and affected dogs will die in a matter of hours without immediate and aggressive veterinary care – usually surgery.

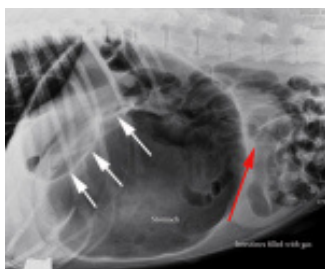


What causes Bloat and Who is at Risk?

- It is not fully understood why some dogs develop bloat but **body shape** (ie deep chested like a Great Dane, Boxer or Poodle), **size** (giant breeds), **age** (risk increases with age) and **genetics** all appear to play a role.
- **Lifestyle factors** such as eating rapidly, eating a large meal followed by vigorous exercise, and stress can also increase the risk. Feeding dry food diets high in fat have also been implicated.

What are the Signs of Bloat?

- Typically, a dog with bloat will rapidly become very uncomfortable – they will pant, appear distressed, repeatedly attempt to vomit without bringing much, if anything, up.
- Many dogs will appear distended through the belly which may be hard and painful to the touch.



What to do If You Suspect Your Dog Has Bloat?

- **Contact a veterinarian immediately! Do not wait!** Even if it is the weekend or the middle of the night – call the office for instructions on reaching the Veterinarian On-Call.
- If you are unsure, it is always better to err on the side of caution. Waiting can be disastrous.

How Is Bloat treated?

Once at the veterinarian, several things will need to happen quickly:

- **X-rays** will be taken to confirm the diagnosis, **IV fluids** will be needed to counteract shock and attempts will be made to 'de-compress' the stomach ASAP – usually by attempting to pass a stomach tube.
- Your dog may need **emergency surgery** – which will involve untwisting the stomach and may involve removal of the spleen and part of the stomach wall.
- Most dogs will have a **gastropexy** performed at the time of surgery to prevent the stomach from twisting again in the future.
- After surgery, your dog will need to be monitored closely for several days - sometimes a life-threatening cardiac arrhythmia (irregular heart beat) can develop.