

We urge you to please read this.

Being aware of this could save your dog's life!

GASTRIC TORSION or "BLOAT" is a very serious health risk for many large and medium sized, deep chested breeds (i.e. boxers) and yet many dog owners are unaware of this condition which can lead to death within hours if not recognised and treated immediately.

It makes no difference if it is a dog or a bitch, young or old, but it can occur suddenly in a perfectly healthy dog.

The scientific term is "Gastric Dilatation-Volvulus"(GDV) or "Gastric Torsion" but most people just refer to it as "BLOAT". It is characterised by a rapid and abnormal stomach expansion with air, fluid and/or foam followed by a stomach rotation which closes both the entry and exit, blocking the veins to the abdomen leading to low blood pressure, shock, damage to internal organs and unless treated in less than 20 minutes, can end in an extremely painful death.

"BLOAT" should always be treated as a medical emergency because it can kill a dog within hours after the onset and although the cause is unknown, boxers are one of the breeds susceptible to it.

How To Help The Prevention Of "BLOAT"

The following guidelines could help to prevent the occurrence of bloat and these suggestions are based on suspected risk factors but are not guaranteed to prevent the onset of "BLOAT".

1. Do not feed one large meal but feed small amounts of food frequently, two or three times daily.
2. Avoid any exercise 1 hour before and 2 hours after any meal.
3. Do not allow your dog to drink large amounts of water immediately before or after eating a meal or after exercise and try to restrict your dog to very small amounts of water only.
4. If possible, feed at a time when after-feeding behaviour can be observed and if you have two or more dogs, feed them separately to avoid any stressful eating.
5. Try to avoid any abrupt changes of diet.

Digestible foods

Another recommendation is frequent feeding of a good quality, highly digestible food with normal fibre levels. Feeding management offers the best method available for reducing risk until the exact cause of "BLOAT" can be identified.

Although not 100% effective, the above measures can reduce the number of dogs that face this serious, life threatening condition.

We have had 4 of our own dogs with this condition. We were able to save two but two died very painful deaths because we could not get to a vet quickly enough.

This is an email that we received from someone who had read this, saved the chart below and was able to act when "BLOAT" occurred and was able to save her boxer from a certain painful death.

"Dear Jackie & Pete,

I don't know if you remember me, the crazy Belgian doctor who gave up her job for her rescue boxer, but now I'm sending this email to sincerely thank you. After reading your bloat flow chart, I printed it and put it in my wallet. Yesterday evening, Watson had his usual dinner and afterwards I took him to play with his Jack Russell friends who are a 25 minute drive away. He started playing as usual and afterwards my friend and I were having a drink (thank god I didn't have my usual glass of wine) and Watson was happy and relaxed at my feet, panting, but that wasn't a surprise after a vigorous playing session. Watson gained a bit of weight and the vet commented on it and as I was telling this to my friend I looked at him and laughingly told her: "look, his harness is becoming a bit tight". Thanks to your flow chart alarm bells started ringing, I felt his pulse and his heart was racing, then he vomited. I could literally see my dog swell so I called the vet, put him in the car and drove like a madwoman. When we arrived, she had everything prepared for emergency surgery, but we were just in time, so he got away with gastric decompression and a night on an IV drip with stomach protection etc. I cannot thank you enough as I'm sure that, if I had never seen your scheme I would never had recognised the symptoms this fast. I was a bit ashamed that my vet had everything ready for emergency surgery, but she said it was a close call, minutes could have made the difference between surgery and if I hadn't been aware and put him to bed (it is not the first time he vomits some white foam), he would surely have passed away during the night. THANK YOU! Apart from all this, at the moment Watson is showing "normal boxer behaviour" and I do think people sometimes give up too soon, not to mention my doubts about some reasons for putting them up for rehoming. Although boxers really need a loving and understanding home, I assume they're better off with somebody who really wants them."

Warm regards,

Katrien & Watson.

As you can see, reading this e-mail, being aware could save your dogs life!

A Quick Reference Guide For GDV(Bloat)				
The Emergency Telephone Number For My Vet Is:				
Causes	What Is Happening	What The Dog Does	What You Should Do	Treatment
Stress Excitement Vigorous Exercise Large Meals Long Drinks Swallowing Air	Stomach function normal. Gas accumulates in the stomach but the stomach does not empty as it should.	Dog behaves as usual. Seems slightly uncomfortable.	Keep The Dog Quiet. Do not leave the dog alone. Give Antacid if your Vet agrees. Be aware of the Phase One symptoms.	During this period the dog may recover without going on to develop Gastric Volvulus (Bloat).
PHASE 1 GDV	Stomach starts to dilate (Gastric Dilatation). Stomach twists (Gastric Volvulus).	Anxious, restless, pacing. Trying to vomit - may bring up stiff white foam but no food; Salivating; Abdomen may be swollen.	Call your Vet and tell him what you suspect and why. Take your dog to the Vet without further delay.	During this period the dog may recover if your Vet is able to release the pressure with a stomach tube.
PHASE 2 GDV	Blood supply to part of the stomach is cut off. Stomach tissue is damaged. Portal Vein, Vena Cava and Splenic Vein become compressed and twisted. Spleen becomes engorged. Shock begins to develop.	Very restless, whining and panting; Salivating copiously; Tries to vomit every 2 - 3 minutes; Stands with legs apart and head hanging down; Abdomen swollen and sounds hollow if tapped; Gums dark red; Heart rate is 80-100 beats per minute; Temp raised (104f).	Get someone to tell your Vet that you are on your way and why. Get your dog to your Vet as quickly as possible.	During this period, the Vet will need to relieve the stomach pressure, start an intravenous drip and perform surgery to untwist the stomach.
PHASE 3 GDV	Spleen and stomach tissue become Necrotic. Shock now very severe. Heart failure develops. shock now irreversible Death!	Unable to stand or stands shakily with legs apart; Abdomen very swollen; Breathing shallow; Gums white or blue; Heart rate over 100 beats per minute Pulse very weak; Temperature drops (98f).	Death is imminent! Get someone to tell your Vet that you are on your way and why. Get your dog to your Vet as quickly as possible.	As well as doing everything above, the Vet will need to remove part of the stomach and the spleen. He will need to use powerful drugs to counter the shock. It is now not possible to save your dogs life!