



Bloating in Dogs

Any large-breed, deep chested dog with an acute onset of abdominal distention should be rushed to your veterinarian for a possible gastric dilatation known as “bloat”.

Gastric dilatation or bloating is a life-threatening disorder that is a medical and surgery emergency. Bloating is the distention of the stomach, usually by swallowed air. The stomach can rotate on itself causing a gastric torsion. The gastric torsion may cause hypovolemic and endotoxic shock. Timing and general good health of the dog are the keys for a successful outcome. Prognosis of such surgery is always guarded.

There is a way to prevent bloating by “fixing” the stomach against the chest wall (gastropexy). This surgery is recommended for breeds with deep chest such as: Akita, Bull Mastiff, Collie, Doberman, German Shepherd, Great Dane, Irish Setter, Irish Wolfhound, Newfoundland, Rottweiler, Saint Bernard, Standard Poodle and Weimaraner.

There are many techniques used to fix the stomach. At our hospital, we offer two different techniques: circumcostal gastropexy and incisional gastropexy. The first technique is more involved but is a definitive fix. A strip of the superficial layer of the stomach is partially detached and pass around a rib, to reconnect with the stomach, making a loop around the rib. The second technique is to make an incision in the muscle of the rib cage and the superficial layer of the stomach, and then to suture them together. These surgeries are recommended to do at the time of the spay or neuter of the animal, though it can be performed at any time.

Prevention of gastric dilatation besides gastropexy includes: prevent overeating and gulping food by offering smaller portions 3 times per day, avoiding exercise within one hour after a meal, and prevent excessive swallowed air.

For more information on bloating, visit www.vet.purdue.edu/depts/vad/cae.

