

HEART CONDITIONS IN DOGS

Heart disease can affect dogs of any age, but early diagnosis can significantly improve quality of life.



Understanding Heart Disease, Signs, Diagnosis & Treatment

Heart disease is a common condition in dogs, particularly as they age. Early detection and appropriate treatment can help many dogs live longer, more comfortable lives.

1 WHAT ARE HEART CONDITIONS?

Heart disease refers to a range of conditions that affect the heart's ability to pump blood effectively.

Common heart conditions in dogs include:

- ✓ Degenerative Mitral Valve Disease (DMVD)
- ✓ Dilated Cardiomyopathy (DCM)
- ✓ Congenital heart defects
- ✓ Arrhythmias (abnormal heart rhythms)
- ✓ Heartworm disease

Heart disease may develop slowly and often progresses over time.



2 DID YOU KNOW?

- ✓ Heart disease is one of the most common conditions seen in older dogs.
- ✓ Small breeds commonly develop valve disease.
- ✓ Large breeds are more prone to heart muscle disease.
- ✓ Dogs can have heart disease long before obvious signs develop.
- ✓ Regular veterinary examinations can detect problems early.



3 RECOGNISE THE SIGNS

Common signs include:

- ✓ Coughing
- ✓ Panting excessively
- ✓ Difficulty breathing
- ✓ Reduced exercise tolerance
- ✓ Lethargy
- ✓ Weakness
- ✓ Weight loss
- ✓ Restlessness at night
- ✓ Fainting or collapse
- ✓ Abdominal swelling

Any breathing difficulty should be assessed by a veterinarian promptly.



4 WHICH DOGS ARE MOST AT RISK?

Higher-risk dogs include:

- ✓ Cavalier King Charles Spaniels
- ✓ Miniature Poodles
- ✓ Chihuahuas
- ✓ Dachshunds
- ✓ Dobermans
- ✓ Boxers
- ✓ Great Danes
- ✓ Cocker Spaniels
- ✓ Senior dogs

However, heart disease can occur in any breed.



5 HOW IS IT DIAGNOSED?

Your veterinarian may perform:

- ✓ Physical examination
- ✓ Heart auscultation (listening for murmurs)
- ✓ Blood pressure measurement
- ✓ Chest radiographs (X-rays)
- ✓ Echocardiography (heart ultrasound)
- ✓ Electrocardiogram (ECG)
- ✓ Blood testing
- ✓ Cardiac biomarker testing

Heart ultrasound is often the best way to assess heart function and structure.



6 COMMON HEART CONDITIONS



Mitral Valve Disease

- Most common in older small-breed dogs
- Causes valve leakage
- May lead to heart enlargement



Dilated Cardiomyopathy (DCM)

- More common in larger breeds
- Heart muscle becomes weakened
- Reduces pumping efficiency



Arrhythmias

- Abnormal heart rhythms
- May cause weakness, or collapse

7 TREATMENT OPTIONS

Treatment depends on the type and severity of disease. May include:

- ✓ Heart medications
- ✓ Diuretics
- ✓ Blood pressure medications
- ✓ Dietary management
- ✓ Weight management
- ✓ Exercise modification
- ✓ Ongoing monitoring

Many dogs experience significant improvement with treatment.



8 MONITORING AT HOME

Contact your veterinarian if you notice:

- ✓ Increased coughing
- ✓ Exercise intolerance
- ✓ Faster breathing
- ✓ Collapse episodes
- ✓ Difficulty breathing
- ✓ Abdominal enlargement
- ✓ Reduced appetite

Monitoring your dog's resting breathing rate can help identify changes early.



9 PREVENTION & EARLY DETECTION

You can help by:

- ✓ Scheduling regular veterinary check-ups
- ✓ Investigating heart murmurs promptly
- ✓ Maintaining a healthy body weight
- ✓ Providing appropriate exercise
- ✓ Using year-round heartworm prevention
- ✓ Following recommended monitoring plans

Early intervention often leads to better outcomes.



10 EVERY DOG COUNTS

If your dog develops coughing, breathing changes, exercise intolerance, weakness, or collapse, arrange a veterinary examination promptly.

Early diagnosis, regular monitoring, and appropriate treatment can help dogs with heart disease live longer, happier lives.



ADDITIONAL TIPS



Heart disease is common in older dogs



Regular health checks aid early detection



Moderate exercise is usually beneficial



Medications should never be stopped without veterinary advice



Ongoing monitoring helps maintain quality of life

