



# MONASH VET

PH: 9544 7455

HANDLED WITH CARE

SINCE 1977



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## **Bloat**

### **(Gastric Dilation, Gastric Dilatation Volvulus)**

Bloat is a condition where the stomach enlarges with either air or other material (for example food) to a point where the animal cannot remove the contents of the stomach. Once enlarged it is possible for the stomach to twist.

Bloat is most common in large deep chested breeds of dogs, such as Great Danes, German Shepherds, Irish Setters, Gordon Setters, Dobermans. Great Danes have an incidence of 40%, German Shepherds 20% and other breeds are less than 10% chance of getting bloat.

Bloat is an emergency condition. Failure to treat the problem will lead to a rapid and painful death.

#### ***Signs of bloat:***

- Trying to vomit, but not bringing anything up.
- Distended stomach.
- Increased salivation.
- Trouble breathing.
- Severe depression.
- Agitation – unable to settle.

Animals with any signs of bloat need immediate Veterinary attention.

#### ***Causes of bloat:***

There are a few known causes of bloat, but there a number of unknown causes of bloat.

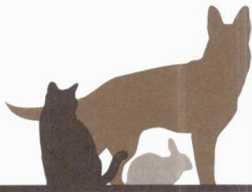
#### **Known Causes:**

- Rapid eating.
- Over-ingestion of food.
- Exercise around the time of feeding.
- Being underweight.
- Stress, including post surgery.
- Being aggressive.

#### **There are a number of recommended preventatives to minimize the chances of bloat:**

- Avoid exercise 1 hour before and 2 hours after eating.
- Reduce the speed of eating – either use a small bowl which is harder to eat out of, or place something in the bowl, such as a toy which will make it harder for the dog to eat.
- Avoid dry food only diets, add canned food with the dry food, or add in chunks of meat.
- Feed multiple meals/day.

*A Lifelearn Product from:*  
Arthur Webster & Associates Pty Ltd  
P O Box 438, PYMBLE NSW 2073 Australia



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- Prophylactic gastropexy: this is surgery to stitch the stomach in place to the abdominal wall when the dog is young to reduce the chances of bloat with a twisted stomach. The animal may bloat again, but the chances of it twisting are less than 5% (compare this with the 40% incidence in Great Danes and 20% in German Shepherds). This is recommended in at risk breeds and can be done at desexing. It is recommended in all at risk breeds.

There are a couple of older 'theories' for preventing bloat which have recently been found to have no impact on the incidence of bloat, and may actually increase the chances of bloat.

- Elevated feeding – this should be avoided, as it actually increases air swallowing and increases the chance of bloat.
- Wetting dry foods.

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