

# GDV (Bloat) – Risks and Prevention

Gastric dilatation volvulus (GDV) or 'bloat' is a common emergency and life-threatening condition of large and giant breed dogs.

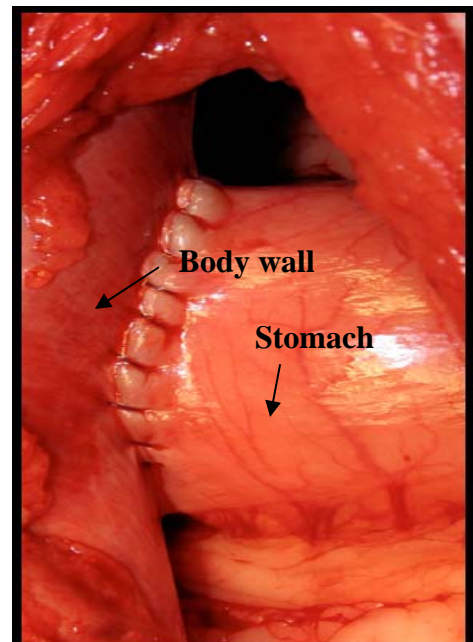
- The likelihood that a pure-bred large or giant breed dog will develop GDV during its lifetime is approximately 24%, depending on the breed.
- The lifetime risk that a Great Dane will develop GDV is 42.4%.
- Predisposed breeds: *Great Dane, German Shepherd Dog, Standard Poodle, Weimaraner, Saint Bernard, Gordon and Irish Setters, and Rottweilers.*
- Predisposing factors that have been identified include increasing age, feeding only once daily, fast eating and excessive swallowing of air (aerophagia), familial history of GDV, and excitable/stressed breeds.
- Female and male dogs are represented equally and dogs as young as 10 months and as old as 14 years have been recognized.
- The true number of cases in a population of dogs remains undetermined although it is reported to affect approximately 60,000 dogs per year.

In any of the predisposed breeds, prophylactic gastropexy is recommended. This can be combined with spay or neutering. The earliest age to perform gastropexy is 4mo of age, but is usually recommended at 6mo and older. Gastropexy for show dogs is especially recommended given the stress associated with showing. It can be successfully performed with a minimal clip/small midline open incision.

***Prophylactic gastropexy, if performed properly, will prevent dogs from developing GDV.*** Some dogs still may have gas or food bloat in the future, but torsion cannot occur. There are very minimal side effects associated with this procedure. In a rare number of dogs, they may have some vomiting after surgery given that their stomach is no longer as moveable. This usually resolves with smaller feedings, which are recommended after surgery.

## What to expect on referral

- Full physical examination
- Full bloodwork is required if not a young, healthy puppy
- General anesthesia with intensive monitoring
  - Pre-medication (sedative + pain medication)
  - Intravenous induction and gas inhalant anesthesia Maintenance.
  - Monitoring of heart and respiratory rate, blood pressure, oxygenation, ECG, end-tidal CO<sub>2</sub>
  - Postoperative pain medication
- Preventative "incisional" gastropexy
  - Tacks the stomach to the body wall in the normal position to create a permanent adhesion
  - Stomach cannot "flip" on itself and result in a life-threatening condition



Photograph of incisional gastropexy.

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To find out more about prophylactic gastropexy, receive an estimate for surgery, or have other breed predisposition questions, please feel free to contact Dr. Fitzwater, our surgeon, at 317.872.8387 or [kfitzwater@circlecityvets.com](mailto:kfitzwater@circlecityvets.com)