

Several cases of bloat in our breed have come to my attention lately so it seems timely to have a discussion of it here. The following was taken from a bloat website and is worth reading and keeping. Several people have suggested that bloat might be prevented by feeding dogs several times a day and not allowing exercise for 2 hours after each meal. Bloat is complicated and the actual cause is relatively unknown.

Bloat in Large Dogs

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Bloat is a veterinary emergency. If you have a large dog who:

1. has dry heaves; tries to vomit, but cannot bring up much in the way of quantity
2. has a tremendously distended abdomen
3. acts confused and weak
4. shows pale mucous membranes

you should consider the possibility of bloat. This is a life-threatening emergency.

Sometimes called overeating syndrome, bloat causes the dog's stomach to swell up due to gas or fluid, or both. The name bloat covers three conditions: gastric dilatation, gastric torsion, and gastric volvulus.

Gastric Dilatation

The swollen stomach without any twisting of the stomach is called gastric dilatation. Note that a dog who can belch or vomit probably does not have a twisted stomach, even though his stomach is grievously distended.

Gastric Torsion and Gastric Volvulus

If the swollen stomach suddenly twists less than 180 degrees on its long axis, the dog is displaying gastric torsion. If the twist exceeds 180 degrees, the problem is called gastric volvulus. The twisting closes off the inlet and the outlet of the stomach. The gastric dilatation compresses the liver and an important artery, leading to a decrease in cardiac efficiency. The torsion compresses the spleen.

Both gastric torsion and gastric volvulus are veterinary emergencies. The dog is in great pain, and his life is at stake. You must bring the dog to the attention of a veterinarian immediately!