



### **What is gastric dilatation volvulus?**

Gastric dilatation volvulus (GDV) generally occurs in larger, deep chested dogs. The stomach becomes filled with air or fluid (bloat), and then the stomach flips over on itself. Once flipped, more air and fluid accumulate within the stomach. Severe distention of the stomach causes damage to, and sometimes death of, the stomach wall. The distended stomach also puts pressure on major blood vessels in the abdomen, causing systemic shock. The spleen is attached to the stomach, and it may be damaged during a GDV episode as well. If not treated quickly, GDV can lead to death.

### **How is GDV treated?**

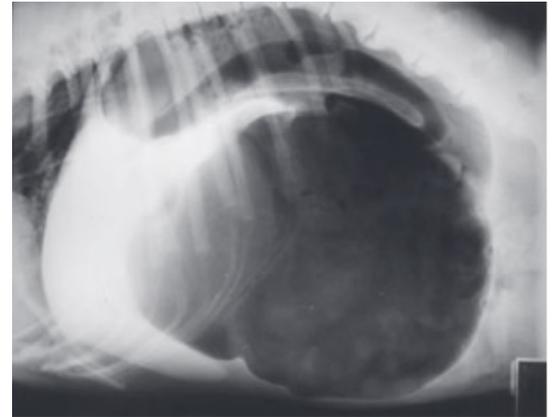
If your dog has a bloated appearance, is uncomfortable, is salivating, and/or is retching, seek emergency veterinary care. If diagnosed with GDV, your dog will require IV fluids, decompression of the stomach, and likely emergency surgery. At surgery, the position of the stomach is corrected and severely damaged portions of the stomach are removed. The spleen is also evaluated and removed if necessary. The stomach is always tacked (or “pexied”) to the body wall so that GDV cannot occur again.

### **What care is required after surgery?**

Following surgery, dogs are monitored in the hospital for anywhere from one to several days. The most common postoperative concerns are abnormal heart rhythms and clotting problems, both of which may require management with various medications or transfusions. Once at home, dogs must rest for a minimum of two weeks. Initially, it is recommended that the daily total food volume is fed in several small meals a day rather than one or two larger ones.

### **What is a prophylactic gastropexy?**

Certain breeds are susceptible to GDV, such as German shepherds, Great Danes, and standard poodles. Clients can elect to have the stomach tacked to the body wall prior to the onset of a GDV, usually at the time the dog is spayed or neutered - this is called a prophylactic gastropexy. This is a very successful way to prevent GDV and the critical issues associated with this disease. A prophylactic gastropexy can be done using a minimally invasive technique called laparoscopy. Please see our “Laparoscopy & Thoracoscopy” handout for more information about this technique.



Top: X-ray of a gas distended and rotated stomach.