

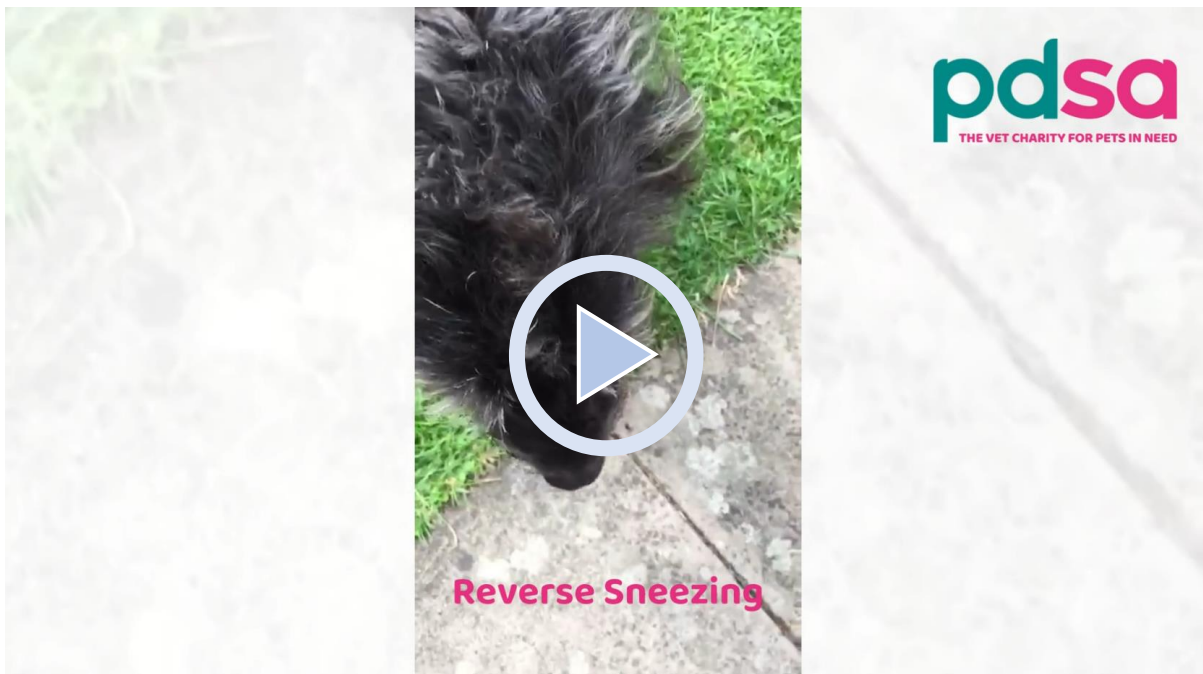


Reverse Sneezing in Dogs

Overview

- Reverse sneezing is when a dog rapidly sucks air through their nose causing a loud snorting noise.
- Reverse sneezing can be alarming to see, but is nearly always harmless.
- Most dogs reverse sneeze because of some sort of irritation at the back of their throat.
- In most cases, nothing needs to be done about reverse sneezing, but it's sensible to speak to your vet if your dog starts doing it out of the blue, or frequently and severely enough to affect their quality of life.

What does reverse sneezing look like?



Reverse sneezing is when a dog rapidly sucks air inwards through their nose (the opposite of a normal sneeze which expels air). They often make a loud snorting noise and it can make them look a bit like they are [choking](#), or struggling to catch their breath. However, despite being alarming for owners to



see, reverse sneezing is usually completely harmless, and episodes tend to last 30-60 seconds.

What causes reverse sneezing in dogs?

Reverse sneezing isn't fully understood, but vets think that most dogs do it to clear some sort of irritation at the back of their throat. Irritation can be caused by:

- Pulling on the lead
- Overexcitement
- Dust
- Air fresheners
- Excessive mucus
- Allergies
- Food or drink
- An overlong soft palate – common in flat-faced breeds such as:
 - o [Pugs](#)
 - o [Bulldogs](#)
 - o [French Bulldogs](#)
 - o [Pekingese](#)
 - o [Shih Tzus](#)

How to stop reverse sneezing

- Stay calm and remember that episodes tend to only last 30 seconds to a minute.
- Keep your dog calm by speaking to them and stroking them gently.
- Some people find that gently rubbing their dog's throat helps.
- Some people find that gently covering one or both nostrils forces their dog to swallow and gets rid of the irritation.

Treatment

If your dog starts reverse sneezing and you aren't sure why, it's sensible to have them checked by your vet. However, if it's only happening occasionally, and your vet is happy there are no underlying problems, it's likely that you won't need to do anything.



If your dog is reverse sneezing regularly enough for it to affect their quality of life, or your vet thinks there is an underlying problem, they may suggest checking their nose and throat under anaesthetic. This is likely to involve an x-ray, and/or a procedure called ‘rhinoscopy’, where a camera is inserted into their nose and throat to check for problems.

It’s very unlikely that your dog will reverse sneeze in a consult, so **try to video an episode before your appointment.**

FAQs

Are there any breeds of dog prone to reverse sneezing?

Yes, small breeds of dog tend to reverse sneeze more than large breeds, and brachycephalic (flat-faced) breeds are more likely to reverse sneeze because they often have an overlong soft palate which gets in the way of their windpipe – read more about [breathing problems in flat-faced dogs](#).

When should I worry about reverse sneezing?

Always let your vet know if your dog is reverse sneezing often enough for it to affect their quality of life, or if they ever faint or collapse after an episode. It is also worth mentioning to your vet if your dog takes a while to recover from an episode of reverse sneezing.

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