

# Loss of balance in dogs

## Overview

- Loss of balance can be caused by many different problems; one of the most common is called vestibular disease.
- Balance and coordination is controlled by the inner ear and brain, problems with either of these areas could cause balance issues. Weakness and other conditions can also cause symptoms that are similar to a loss in balance.
- Book an appointment with your vet ASAP if your dog is having problems with their balance.

## Symptoms to look out for

Your dog may show several symptoms depending on the cause of their balance problem:

- Head tilting to one side
- Vomiting or retching
- Signs of feeling sick (lip licking, swallowing, drooling, off food)
- Flickering eye movements
- Muscle weakness and wobbling
- Falling over
- Unsteady walking
- Walking round in a circle
- Difficulty placing feet
- Standing with their legs wide apart

- Balance getting worse when concentrating on a task such as eating

## Causes

**Vestibular disease.** A very common cause behind a dog losing their balance is vestibular disease. Vestibular disease is a problem deep in the ear (inner ear) – an older dog is more likely to develop vestibular disease than a young dog.

**Brain.** The brain controls most of our body, if it develops a problems such as an infection, inflammation, an injury, a bleed, a blood clot, seizures or a brain tumour, your dog is likely to develop many symptoms, including loss of balance. Some puppies are born wobbly because of a problem with the balance centre in their brain (called the cerebellum).

**Spine.** Spinal fractures, infections around the spine, inflammation of the spine and slipped disks can cause paralysis – which, depending on how severe it is, can look a bit like loss of balance.

**Other.** Weakness in the legs, eating something poisonous or having a reaction to a medicine (some antibiotics) can all cause symptoms that look like loss of balance.

## When to contact your vet

Contact your vet if your dog loses its balance, in most cases they will be able to help them recover.

**You know your dog best. Contact your vet if you're concerned.**

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