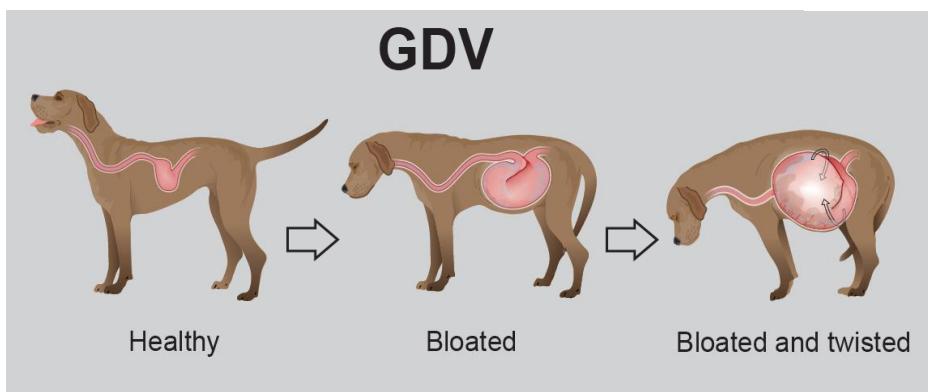


# GDV (Gastric Dilatation Volvulus)

## Overview

- GDV 'Gastric Dilatation Volvulus' means a stomach that has bloated and twisted.
- GDV is a painful, life-threatening emergency that often develops over the period of just a few minutes.
- Deep chested, large and giant breed dogs are most at risk of GDV.
- The faster your dog is treated, the better their chance of surviving a GDV.
- Despite treatment, sadly, 1 in 3 dogs die from GDV.
- **Contact your vet immediately if you notice any of the symptoms above, or you are worried your dog might have a GDV – never wait to see if they improve.**



## GDV explained

GDV is a life-threatening condition that often develops very quickly. Left untreated a GDV will rapidly lead to death.

GDV is when the stomach bloats (fills with gas) and twists, trapping the gas. Once the stomach has twisted, gas continues

to accumulate, which causes severe bloating and is very painful. The stomach can't twist back and the only cure is an operation to correct it. GDV causes serious illness very quickly. Around 1 in 3 dogs that develop a GDV die, even with treatment.

## Symptoms

- Sudden bloating (hard, swollen belly)
- Stomach pain
- Vomiting without bringing anything up (retching)
- Weakness and collapse
- Pale gums
- Excessive drooling
- Collapse and coma
- Shock and death

## When to contact your vet

### **EMERGENCY!**

**Contact your vet immediately if you notice any symptoms of a GDV – never wait to see if they improve.**

You know your dog – if they don't have the exact symptoms listed above, but you are still concerned, it's always best to contact your vet. It is always better to be safe than sorry.

## Treatment

**A GDV is a life-threatening emergency that needs immediate treatment.** If your vet suspects your dog has a

GDV, they will admit them into the hospital to stabilise and treat them as quickly as possible. Treatment will involve:

**X-rays/scans.** X-rays and/or scans to confirm the GDV.

**Releasing bloat.** Emergency measures to release the gas from your dog's stomach.

**Fluids.** Dogs with a GDV go into shock and develop dangerously low blood pressure - a fluid drip will keep their blood pressure up.

**Pain relief.** A GDV is an extremely painful condition; pain relief will be given to make your dog more comfortable.

**Surgery.** Your vet will perform surgery to untwist your dog's stomach. They will also check that the twist hasn't caused any severe damage to the stomach or spleen. After untwisting the stomach, your vet may decide to attach it to the body wall to reduce the chance of it happening again. If the spleen has been badly damaged, it may need removal.

**After surgery.** Many complications can develop after surgery, so your dog will need to stay in hospital for close monitoring. They are likely to need several days of intensive nursing, a drip, medication and tests. Your vet will only send your dog home once they are satisfied they are out of danger. Even when your dog is home, you will need to monitor them carefully for symptoms such as not eating, low energy, vomiting or another bout of bloating – always contact your vet if you're worried, never wait to see what happens.

## Outlook

Sadly, the outlook for a dog with GDV is not very good. The sooner your dog is treated, the better their chance of survival, but approximately 1 in 3 dogs with a GDV die, even if they receive the best possible treatment straight away. Some dogs

die before they even reach the vets, some during surgery, and some several hours or even days later. If your dog does survive a GDV, there is still a risk it could happen again.

## Causes and prevention

No one really knows why GDVs develop, but there are factors that make one more likely and things you can do to reduce the chance of one developing.

**Breed.** Be aware if your dog is one of the breeds at risk of a GDV – large, deep chested dogs e.g. Great Danes, German Shepherds and Greyhounds are most at risk of a GDV.

**Excitable/nervous dogs.** Know your dog, excitable and nervous dogs tend to be more prone to developing a GDV. If your dog is either of these, act fast if you notice bloating.

**Exercise around meal times.** Vigorous exercise or travelling in a car after a meal can increase the risk of a GDV. Avoid exercising, or travelling around meal times.

**Fast eating.** Eating very quickly and gulping air can increase the chance of a GDV. If your dog gulps his/her food, try to slow them down by using a slow feeding bowl. Feed several small meals through the day rather than one big one and feed a mixture of wet and dry food.

**Don't feed from a height.** Feed from the floor, not from a raised bowl. Previous advice was to feed from a raised bowl, but this has now been shown to **increase** the risk of a GDV.

**Drinking a lot in one go.** Drinking a lot of water in one go can increase the chance of a GDV, try to encourage your dog to drink little and often.

**Change your dog's food slowly.** If you need to change your dog's diet do it gradually.

## Cost

Treatment for a GDV can become very expensive. Consider insuring your dog as soon as you get them, before any signs of illness start. This will ensure you have all the support you need to care for them.

It's also very important to speak openly to your vet about your finances, the cost of treatment, as well as what you think is right for your dog. There are often several treatment options so if one doesn't work for you and your pet then the vet may be able to offer another.

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