

Dilated Cardiomyopathy

Edited and Rewritten Version

Abstract

{breed_short_name_plural} are especially prone to a life-threatening heart condition known as dilated cardiomyopathy, or DCM. The disease causes the heart to become so large, thin, and weak that it can no longer effectively pump blood to the body. To screen for the disease, your veterinarian will listen for unusual heart rates and rhythms during each routine wellness exam. Additional recommendations for regular screening could include a chest X-ray, electrocardiogram, or ultrasound. In dogs that have the disease, progressive deterioration of the heart causes them to act weak or tired, faint, or collapse. Other common signs include difficulty breathing and coughing while lying down or exercising. Possible treatments include medication and dietary changes.

Short Description

The heart becomes so large, thin, and weak that it can no longer effectively pump blood to the body.

What to Watch for

Fainting, collapsing, difficulty breathing, coughing

Older Versions, Supplied by Client

Client Version 1

Dogs are especially prone to a life-threatening heart condition known as dilated cardiomyopathy, or DCM, in which the heart becomes so large, thin, and weak that it can no longer effectively pump blood to the body. As this problem advances, she may act weak or tired, faint or collapse, breathe in a labored way, or cough while lying down or with exertion. We may recommend a yearly electrical heart screening (ECG) and/or an echocardiogram (ultrasound) starting at age one to look for abnormal heart rhythms early. If found, we'll treat this condition with medication and may also recommend dietary supplementation.

What to watch for:

Fainting, collapsing, problems breathing, coughing (while resting or while exercising/playing)

Client Version 2

Some Dogs may develop a life-threatening heart condition known as Dilated Cardiomyopathy (DCM). With DCM, the heart muscle becomes thin and weak; the heart enlarges and can no longer effectively pump blood to the body. As this problem advances, you may notice that your dog is weak or tires easily. She may faint, collapse, cough when resting, cough with exercise/play, or have difficulty breathing.

Your veterinarian listens to your dog's heart for murmurs and arrhythmias (unusual heart rates or rhythms) during each examination. Regular screening of the heart with an ECG, chest x-ray, and/or echocardiogram (ultrasound of the heart) may be recommended to identify any problems early. These tests may also be suggested before any anesthetic procedures are performed. Follow your veterinarian's advice about screening for DCM and let your vet know if you see any symptoms of this heart condition at home.

What To Watch For:

Fainting, collapse, breathing issues, cough