

Distended Abdomen in Dogs

The causes and treatments of a dog's distended abdomen.

CAUSES OF DISTENDED ABDOMEN

Parasites/Parasite-borne diseases: Roundworms (especially in puppies) or heartworms.

Non-infectious/Acquired disease: Heart disease (leading to congestive heart failure, which is characterized by ascites, an accumulation of fluid in the abdomen).

Miscellaneous disorders: Gastric dilatation-volvulus, chronic hypertrophic gastropathy, which causes gastric obstruction due to pyloric stenosis (narrowing of the junction between the stomach and small intestine), or ileus (decreased intestinal activity, following surgery, obstruction, or disease).

Foreign bodies: In stomach, small intestine, colon, or rectum.

Tumors: In stomach, small intestine, colon, rectum, liver, or kidney.

Endocrine disorders: Hyperadrenocorticism (Cushing's disease) or pyometra (uterine infection).

Nutritional/Metabolic disorder: Malabsorption syndrome, which causes hypoproteinemia (protein deficiency) leading to ascites.

Infectious diseases: Histoplasmosis or coccidioidomycosis (both fungal).

Congenital diseases: Chronic hepatitis (commonly in Dobermans, Labrador Retrievers, American and English Cocker Spaniels, Bedlington Terriers, West Highland White Terriers).

What to do: Some types of abdominal distension may or may not be an emergency, depending on the severity, cause, other signs of illness and the dog's overall status (getting worse, improving, stable). Contact your veterinarian or emergency clinic immediately for specific advice about your dog's situation.

Other: Obesity or pregnancy.

What to do: If your dog's distended abdomen is due to obesity, consult your veterinarian about a weight-loss plan. If your dog is pregnant, contact your veterinarian about prenatal care.

Disclaimer: DogChannel.com's Dog Medical Conditions are intended for educational purposes only. They are not meant to replace the expertise and experience of a professional veterinarian. Do not use the information presented here to make decisions about your dog's ailment. If you notice changes in your dog's health or behavior, please take your pet to the nearest veterinarian or an emergency pet clinic as soon as possible.