

Is High Cholesterol a Problem?

Can cholesterol affect your dog's blood levels?

Jon Geller, DVM

Q. My 13-year-old female Border Collie's semi-annual bloodwork shows that she has very high cholesterol. None of her other test results were abnormal. She eats Purina JM (Joint Management) formula due to arthritis and bone spurs at the base of her spine, which has bothered her since last year. This is the first time her cholesterol was high. She was tested again a week later to check for any lab errors, but her bloodwork was still high. My vet has been unable to find anything wrong with her to account for the elevated level. We are considering changing her food to see if it has anything to do with the abnormal level. Do you have any ideas about anything else we can do?

A. Cholesterol is not a significant marker in a dog's blood test results, unless there are also other chemistries that are abnormal. Heart disease is relatively rare in dogs compared to humans, and reports of arteriosclerotic plaques due to cholesterol buildup are not reported in dogs.

If all of the other chemistry results are in the normal range, you have a very healthy 13-year-old dog, so congratulations!

I would continue to feed the JM diet she is currently on if it seems to help her arthritis. By the way, the current disease-treating diets that are available are amazingly brilliant breakthroughs in pet nutrition! Instead of prescription and over-the-counter medications twice a day, dog owners can select the food that is most beneficial to their dog's primary problem.

There are diets for weight loss, dental disease, heart disease, kidney disease, dementia, arthritis, food allergies, skin problems, urinary disease and other ailments. Ask your veterinarian for more information.

Best, Jon Geller, DVM

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