

## Dog's Collapse Could Be Mini-Stroke

**When artery is blocked only briefly, dog will show stroke symptoms.**

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Q. This morning when our 12-year-old Miniature Pinscher got up to go outside, he collapsed on his side. He tried getting up and fell over again. Then he walked out the door, but did not want to go down the steps to relieve himself. He came back and lay on his bed. About 45 minutes later, he was his old self. Could this be a sign of a stroke? Or is it something that just happened by chance?

A. It sounds like your Min Pin had a stroke-like episode. Strokes are rarely diagnosed in dogs because it is so difficult to do so. Usually an MRI is required to confirm the presence of a blockage in an artery going to the brain. However, as more MRIs are done on dogs, more strokes are being diagnosed.

A stroke occurs when there is a blockage in an artery that flows to the brain, briefly depriving the brain of oxygen. In a mini-stroke, it can be very short-term, and a dog will recover fully, as it sounds like your dog has.

Another possibility is that he had a brief seizure, which also would only last a short time before he returned to normal. Features of seizures include loss of coordination and awareness, paddling with the legs, and possibly biting and drooling. Often, there is a loss of bowel and bladder control.

Heart problems can also cause an episode of collapse, known as syncope. A syncopal episode is similar to fainting in humans, where there is not enough oxygen being pumped to the brain.

If your dog is fully recovered, you should start a diary or log that describes any similar events in the future, so your veterinarian has an accurate history. Even better, have him checked out by your veterinarian to make sure there is no obvious problem, such as an imbalance in his blood.

Treatment for episodes of collapse entirely depend on the underlying diagnosis, so it is important to carefully monitor your Min Pin for any future problems, and hopefully get him into your veterinarian for a physical exam and blood-screening tests.