

April 8, 2009



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Pearls for the Practitioner

Topic: Gastric Dilatation and Volvulus

The Animal Medical Center has created this e-mail publication to keep you informed about the latest practices in veterinary medicine and how these practices are being applied at The AMC. If you are interested in obtaining past issues of "Pearls for the Practitioner" or if you would like to be removed from this mailing list, please e-mail lynne.freeman-gassem@amcny.org.

Gastric dilatation and volvulus (GDV) is a frequently fatal syndrome in dogs. Research has shown large breed, deep chested dogs such as the Great Dane, Gordon Setter, Irish Setter, Weimaraner and St. Bernard are the most commonly affected breeds. Successful treatment of GDV is possible, but carries a high mortality rate and a high cost, therefore, development of an effective prevention strategy for this syndrome is desirable.

Multiple interventions have been suggested to prevent GDV. They include dietary changes and using special food bowls designed to slow the rate at which dogs consume their food. One study of Rotweillers and Great Danes has shown prophylactic gastropexy decreases the risk of GDV.

Prophylactic gastropexy is indicated in breeds at risk for GDV. At The Animal Medical Center, we chose potential candidates from those with recurrent episodes of gastric dilatation (bloat) without volvulus, offspring or siblings of dogs that have had GDV, and from dogs of predisposed breeds whose owners are concerned about GDV. We consider performing this procedure at the same time as ovariohysterectomy or neutering in dogs at risk for GDV.

Laparoscopic gastropexy is a minimally invasive technique that has been shown to result in a strong, permanent adhesion and therefore greatly reduces the risk of the gastric torsion that characterizes GDV. Laparoscopic gastropexy is minimally invasive, quick, method to prevent GDV which has been reported to have few complications. Additionally, laparoscopic procedures have been shown to be associated with reduced post operative pain and faster recovery than open procedures. In female dogs, this procedure can also be combined with a laparoscopic ovariectomy.

If you have questions, or are interested in referring a patient for surgery, please contact Dr. Janet Kovak McClaran at 212.329.8710, or janet.kovak@amcny.org.

The Department of Surgery at The AMC

The surgeons at The AMC, who are certified by the American College of Veterinary Surgery, provide seven-day-per-week expertise, state-of-the-art surgical techniques and emergency surgical care. We also offer specialty services such as veterinary dentistry, rehabilitation and pet fitness services, orthopedics and soft-tissue surgery. Our surgeons work closely with internal medicine, oncology, radiology, critical care and pathology specialists to coordinate testing and to determine the least invasive and effective procedures necessary to optimize patient outcomes.

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