



What is *GDV*?

HOW WE CAN HELP LARGE BREEDS

Gastric Dilation & Volvulus (GDV)

Large dog breeds are susceptible to a serious condition known as **Gastric Dilation & Volvulus (GDV)**. This can cause the stomach to fill with gas and twist on itself. This twisting can trap gas and block blood vessels causing shock as blood fails to flow to the heart. This causes tissues to die and potassium is released into the blood vessels which can stop the heart. This is an emergency and affected dogs can die within an hour of first showing symptoms.

Deep-chested dogs, including but not limited to Great Danes, Weimerana's, Irish Setters are at increased risk; there are genetic risk factors and vigorous exercise immediately after eating increases susceptibility.

Treatment

Surgery to fix the stomach to the abdominal wall prevents the stomach from twisting. This surgical procedure is called a **gastropexy**. Gastropexy can be performed **preventatively** or in an **emergency**.

The biggest challenge with GDV emergencies is how unstable dogs become once they have shown symptoms – anaesthesia for surgery is therefore very risky and can be fatal. A tube will be passed through the twist in the stomach to release gas from the stomach. This won't fix the problem but will buy some time to stabilise the dog for urgent surgery.

It's necessary to treat the shock and bring blood potassium down before the dog can be safely operated on. Surgery involves urgently decompressing the stomach. If any part of the stomach has died, this tissue will be removed.

**NB in some cases, the spleen may also be removed.*

Present to an emergency veterinarian if you notice any of the following symptoms: hard bloated abdomen, excessive drooling, retching, restlessness, pale gums and collapse.