



SIGNS OF HEART DISEASE IN DOGS

ABSTRACT

Early diagnosis and treatment of heart disease in a pet are critical. We've listed the most common warning signals of heart disease, any of which require immediate attention by your veterinarian.

Signs of Heart Disease in Dogs

Early diagnosis and treatment of heart disease in a pet are critical. We've listed the most common warning signals of heart disease, any of which require immediate attention by your veterinarian.

Coughing

Coughing is a common symptom of heart disease as well as other diseases. A minor cough should not last more than a few days. If after three days your dog is still coughing, or is experiencing other symptoms, seek veterinary care.

Some common causes for coughing:

- *Respiratory tract diseases including tumors, infections (viral, bacterial, and parasitic)*
- *Aspiration pneumonia (due to entrance of stomach contents or ingested food particles in the respiratory tract)*
- *Foreign bodies in the respiratory tract*
- *Allergies*
- *Cardiac diseases*

Difficulty Breathing

Changes in breathing relating to heart disease may be evidenced by shortness of breath, labored breathing, or rapid breathing.

Changes in Your Pet's Behavior

If you notice your dog is tiring more easily, is less playful, reluctant to exercise, reluctant to accept affection, becomes withdrawn, or shows signs of depression, these are signs of heart disease.

Poor Appetite

Loss of appetite when combined with any of the other symptoms on this list, could be a strong indicator of heart disease.

Weight Loss or Gain

Weight loss is definitely a symptom of heart disease, though weight gain can be as well. More likely than weight gain is a bloated or distended abdomen, giving your dog a potbellied appearance.

Fainting/Collapsing

If your dog faints or collapses at any time, seek veterinary help. It may be a sign of a serious illnesses, heart disease being one of them.

A less common, but more alarming sign, is fainting (which can look like seizures) when your pet gets very excited. This is very scary but they often faint and then quickly recover from the episode. If your dog is doing this, take them to the vet immediately

Weakness

Weakness may be seen as a general sign of aging, but be sure to seek veterinary attention if it is combined with other symptoms

If you take your dog out for his usual walk and you notice that he does not want to walk the usual mile, but instead stops at the third or fourth block, sits down and pants, this may mean he is tiring sooner than he used to. This could be a sign of what vets usually call “poor exercise tolerance.” There are several reasons for such lack of exercise tolerance, however, weakening of the heart muscle from heart disease is high on the list, and should be investigated. Regardless of the reason, it is not normal behavior for your pet and should be investigated.

Restlessness

If your dog gets restless, especially at night, it could be another sign of have heart disease.

Edema

Edema is the swelling of body tissues, such as swelling in the abdomen and extremities.

Isolation

If your dog suddenly starts to isolate itself or is keeping its distance from other pets and/or you, this may be a sign of heart disease.

Reference List:

Top 10 signs of heart disease in dogs. (n.d). Retrieved from
http://www.petmd.com/dog/slideshows/general_health/top-ten-signs-of-heart-disease-in-dogs

Fainting in Dogs: (n.d.) Retrieved from: http://www.petmd.com/dog/conditions/neurological/c_dg_syncope