

## Heart Disease

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### YOUR DOG & HEART DISEASE

#### How Common is Heart Disease?

Heart disease is frequently encountered in dogs. The function of the heart is to maintain an adequate flow of blood to the tissues and organs of the body. Acquired diseases affecting the heart valves or heart muscle can eventually cause the heart to fail and result in inadequate blood flow.

#### How is Heart Disease Detected?

A thorough physical exam, including listening the heart and lungs with a stethoscope, is how veterinarians determine that heart disease may be present in your dog.

To help confirm the diagnosis of heart disease, radiographs (x-rays) of the chest can help your veterinarian evaluate the size of the heart and condition of the lungs. In addition, the electrocardiogram can be used to evaluate how fast the heart is beating. Irregularities in the heartbeat also can be identified with an electrocardiogram.

#### What Signs Should I Look For?

The most common signs associated with heart disease are:

- Coughing
- Lack of energy
- Irregular and rapid breathing
- Weight loss
- Abdominal swelling

#### Your Veterinarian Has Options You Can Consider.

Heart disease can be treated and your veterinarian can discuss an appropriate treatment plan for your dog with you. It is important to have periodic check-ups to evaluate your dog's progress. How well your pet responds at home will depend on how advanced the heart disease is and your ability to follow your veterinarians instructions. By adhering to the professional advice of your veterinarian and with your own careful attention, your pet can often live a comfortable and longer life.

#### HOW DOES HEART DISEASE AFFECT MY DOG?

HEART – impaired pumping ability

LUNGS – Fluid build-up

KIDNEY – Sodium and water retention

VASCULATURE – Constricted blood vessels and increased resistance to blood flow

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