

Collies and related breeds: Sometimes Collies and related breeds are sensitive to Ivermectin, a medication used to prevent and treat heartworm disease. Other preventatives are effective and do not carry the risk of side effects, so we will usually just prescribe a different monthly preventative such as Interceptor or Sentinel.

Dachshunds: Doxies are more likely than other breeds to become allergic to the Leptospirosis vaccine. We recommend this vaccine for all our canine patients because Leptospirosis is a serious and often deadly disease that is also a risk for humans. However, if a particular dog has an allergic reaction to the vaccine we will discontinue it.

Doberman Pinschers: Dobies are sensitive to sulfa antibiotics and are more likely to develop dry eye from this medicine, so we avoid its use when possible.

Lhasa apsos, Shih tzus and Yorkshire terriers can have hair loss after steroid injections. Usually these drugs can be administered orally instead when necessary. **Sight hounds, including Afghans, Greyhounds, Irish wolfhounds, Italian greyhounds, etc.,** do not process barbiturate anesthetics very well. We rarely will use this class of drugs for anesthesia nowadays anyway, so it is rarely a factor as far as anesthetic risk. Barbiturates should be avoided in these breeds except to control seizures.

• **Gastrointestinal Disorders...** Several breeds are prone to gastrointestinal diseases that lead to chronic loose stools or vomiting. Many of these dogs have more than one thing wrong. They may have vomiting or diarrhea constantly or it may flare up suddenly and then improve again for a time. Stress, diet change or intestinal parasites may make it worse. This cluster of problems includes: food allergy; Small Intestinal Bacterial Overgrowth (SIBO), where there are increased numbers of bacteria in the upper intestine; Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD) in which the intestinal lining becomes overrun with immune system cells called lymphocytes and plasmacytes; malabsorption of cobalamin (Vit. B12); and Exocrine Pancreatic Insufficiency (EPI), in which the pancreas no longer makes enough enzymes to digest food properly. **Recommendation:** *If your dog has diarrhea or digestive upsets that are not explained by the more common reasons, such as parasites or Clostridium bacterial infection, an array of diagnostic tests will be needed to sort out the causes affecting your pet. Lifetime medications and special diets are usually required to keep problems under control. Pet insurance is a great idea for at risk breeds, as diagnosis and treatment can both be expensive.*

• **Hydrocephalus, or water on the brain ...** Hydrocephalus occurs when fluid builds up inside the skull, squishing brain tissue. It is most common in breeds with dome shaped heads. It is often found in association with open fontanelles, where the skull bones don't fuse properly. Symptoms include seizures, difficulty training the puppy or altered mental status. It is usually diagnosed early in life but occasionally is found in adult dogs. **Recommendation:** *CT or MRI scan if symptoms develop. Shunt placement surgery can sometimes be done.*

• **Intervertebral Disc Disease (IVDD) ...** This condition is common in dogs with long backs and short legs, though it can occur in other breeds as well. It commonly affects the neck or lower back, causing pain and sometimes paralysis. Dachshunds are the most likely to need emergency surgery for this condition. The disease is caused when the jelly-like



cushion between one or more vertebrae slips or ruptures, pressing on the spinal cord. If your dog suddenly is unable or unwilling to jump up or go up stairs, back pain is likely. He may be reluctant to move around, have a hunched back, or refuse to eat or go potty – it may be very painful to squat to urinate or defecate. As with people, back pain can be very severe, leaving some dogs screaming in pain. They often cry when picked up or, with neck pain, if they try to turn or lower their head. They may drag the back feet or be suddenly paralyzed and be unable to get up or use the back legs. If the slipped disc is in the neck, all four legs may be affected. Surgery is often required with paralysis, or the paralysis may be permanent. A myelogram, CT or MRI will be done to identify which discs have ruptured and then those are surgically removed. For the best prognosis, surgery must be done within 24 hours of the onset of symptoms. In milder cases, where the disc is swollen or not protruding out of place very far, rest and medication may resolve the problem. **Recommendation:** *Because this disease is so painful, call immediately if your dog shows any symptoms. Pain medications will be given ASAP and then, if surgery is not indicated, a program prescribed for rest and gradual return to exercise. As with so many other diseases, weight control helps to prevent IVDD. Ramps or steps should be used from puppyhood on so that susceptible dogs don't spend a lifetime stressing their backs jumping up and down on and off the furniture. Digging and going up and down stairs also cause stress on the back and should be avoided.*

- **Keratoconjunctivitis Sicca, Dry Eye (KCS)** ... Pannus, or chronic, superficial keratitis, is an inflammatory disease of the cornea that can have similar symptoms. This form of KCS can usually be diagnosed based on the appearance of the eye because it causes dark pigmented corneal lesions. Diagnosis of KCS is simple. A paper strip is tucked under the lower eyelid. Tears soak the strip. After 1 minute we look to see how many millimeters of the strip became wet. This test is called a Schirmer tear test, or STT. A reading under 15 is low. 16-18 is borderline, and above that is normal. Treatment consists of eye ointment that will be necessary for the remainder of the pet's life. This is a disease in which the tear glands no longer produce enough tears to keep the eye moist. Eye ulcers and infections result. Symptoms include a thick, mucousy eye discharge, squinting, pawing at the eye or a dull, dry look instead of a glistening, shiny eye. This is a painful condition that should be taken care of as soon as possible. Treatment usually involves the same cyclosporin ointment used for KCS but the prognosis is more guarded. **Recommendation:** *The STT should be done at least once a year once a pet reaches age twelve, sooner for at risk breeds or if symptoms become apparent.*

- **Pododermatitis** ... This painful condition causes blisters or ulcers between the dog's toes. These are especially common in pets with allergies. The blisters frequently are infected and require antibiotic therapy. **Recommendation:** *check for these if ever your dog is licking at its feet or limping, and have them treated promptly..*

- **Respiratory Distress Syndrome**

This disease affects brachycephalic dogs – those with a short nosed face shape, such as bulldogs, Pekingese and pugs. These breeds have the same amount of tissue in their noses and throats as other dogs but there is no place for it to go. As a consequence, the soft palate – the soft part of the back of the roof of the mouth – is too long and hangs down into the airway. Their nostrils are often too small, and sometimes the trachea, or windpipe, is narrow and undersized.

All these things lead to a narrow and obstructed airway. Many of these dogs can barely breathe, have sleep apnea, snore, contract repeated respiratory infections, develop swelling and congestion in their throats that worsens the problem, and die at an early age. They are also more prone to heat stroke and have a higher risk for anesthetic complications.

BREED RISKS

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Recommendation: Correct these defects with surgery early on, ideally at the time of spaying or neutering. The long soft palate can be shortened, the nostrils can be snipped open, and more normal breathing will be restored. Some dogs are not affected enough to need surgery early on but become more problematic as they get older, in which case surgery can be done at that time.



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