



CROSSROADS Animal Hospital



Pet Talk

Spring 2019



Canine Crisis

Symptoms and Causes of Seizures in Dogs

Like humans, dogs can experience seizures, which are caused by abnormal episodes of electrical activity in your dog's brain. Seizures may present themselves as partial (affecting one part or side of the body) or grand mal (affecting both sides of the brain and body). What does a seizure look like? Symptoms include collapsing or fainting, muscle twitches, jerking, stiffness, paddling, chomping and drooling. Seizures often occur when the dog is asleep or resting. Lasting several seconds to several minutes, your dog may lose consciousness.

There are many possible causes of seizures. These include:

- Poison
- Anemia
- Strokes
- Encephalitis
- Head Injury
- Brain tumor
- Infectious blood disease
- Viral or fungal diseases
- Liver or kidney disease
- Low or high blood sugar



Seizures can occur as young as 6 months of age, and male dogs are more likely to have seizures than females. Certain breeds are also more susceptible to seizures, including Golden Retrievers, Labrador Retrievers, Keeshonds, Vizslas, Belgian Tervurens, Shetland Sheepdogs, Poodles and Beagles.

Before your dog has a seizure, there may be warning signs such as being frightened, stressed, confused or losing bowel control. After a seizure occurs, your dog may be disoriented and wobbly.

If your dog experiences seizures, keep a record of the episodes including time of day, length of seizure and severity. Your veterinarian will perform a complete physical and neurological exam and test your dog's blood, kidney, liver and sugar levels. Medications are available to control seizures; however, it is important that we try to determine the cause. Seizures are a serious medical condition that should be treated as soon as possible. If you know or suspect your dog is having a seizure, contact us right away!

Sugar Blues

Recognizing Hypoglycemia in Dogs

Hypoglycemia is a potentially life-threatening condition in which glucose (sugar) in the bloodstream plummets to dangerous levels. Canine hypoglycemia can be a symptom of several different illnesses including diabetes, pancreatic or liver disease, Addison's Disease, poisoning or parasites. Puppies and small breed dogs are more prone to hypoglycemia, although it can affect dogs of any size, age or breed.

Many toy breeds have a genetic predisposition to hypoglycemia and missing a meal can cause a rapid drop in blood sugar. Susceptible dogs must eat smaller amounts of food but frequently to help prevent episodes. Dogs that are diabetic can also suffer from erratic blood sugar levels that should be controlled with diet, insulin or other medications.

Glucose in the bloodstream is needed for all brain functions, so the first symptoms of hypoglycemia may be neurological. Common symptoms include agitation, nervousness, lethargy, weakness, trembling, loss of balance, disorientation, reduced vision, muscle twitching, and even loss of consciousness. You may also see dilated pupils, panting, pacing, loss of bladder control or seizures.

Hypoglycemia is a serious condition, so call us or an emergency clinic immediately if you observe these symptoms. If you suspect your dog is hypoglycemic, please make an appointment so we can discuss preventative measures and emergency procedures.



Sound Check

Why Do Cats Purr?

For most cat lovers there's nothing better than the sound of a cat purring! A purr is produced using the cat's larynx and the diaphragm to produce a vibration. The sound is made both during inhaling and exhaling, which is why a kitten can nurse and purr at the same time!



But what does it mean? Researchers aren't entirely sure why cats purr. Cheetahs, bobcats, ocelots, lynxes and cougars also purr. Some believe kittens produce the sound when they are near their mothers to let them know they are alright; however, it is unknown whether purring is voluntary or involuntary. Cats may purr when they are content, snuggling with humans or litter mates, or when

they want attention or food. Cats can also purr when they are in pain or anxious. This may be a way to calm themselves much like when a child sucks his thumb.

Our furry felines engage in many behaviors when attempting to communicate what they want or how they feel. They squint, stretch, scratch, weave in and out of our legs, rub their faces and spray. Purring may be another way to communicate. Whatever the reason they purr, it seems to be calming to cats and to the humans that love them!

Feeding Fluffy

What Diet Is Right for Your Cat?

When thinking about feline nutrition, remember that your purr-ball is a natural carnivore. They thrive on nutrients found in animal products, which means high protein, some fats and limited carbohydrates. Although they need other nutrients such as vitamins, minerals, fatty acids and amino acids, supplements can harm them, so don't give these without your veterinarian's approval. Providing a balanced diet should be all your cat needs.

When speaking of feline nutritional needs, it's important to consider hydration. Many cats don't drink enough, and dehydration can lead to kidney disease and other common feline ailments. While dry food is most convenient for cat owners, adding canned or semi-moist food can help your kitty stay hydrated. Always provide clean water and change it often as cats can be finicky about stale water.

The good news is, you don't have to become an expert on feline dietary needs. Good commercial cat foods usually provide a complete and balanced diet within standards established by the Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO). We are happy to discuss or recommend a diet for your healthy adult cat. If you have a kitten or senior cat, or if your cat has an illness or is obese, we will recommend diets specially formulated for their needs.

Most cats can be fed twice daily with the amounts recommended by manufacturers but watch for weight gain to avoid overfeeding. We don't suggest feeding a diet your cat doesn't find palatable no matter how nutritious it is. Cats can have sensitive digestive tracts, so if you change foods do it gradually by introducing a little more of the new food mixed with a little less of the old over several days. Be sure to discuss your fur-baby's diet with us during your next exam.



Call (512) 321-0506 today to make an appointment!



'Paws'itive Benefits

Why You Should Spay or Neuter Your Pet

Although spaying and neutering are safe and inexpensive procedures, pet owners' failure to comply results in up to 16,000 pets per day being euthanized because they don't have a home. Unfortunately, pet overpopulation is a heartbreaking problem. The Humane Society estimates that there are more than 3 million homeless pets in the U.S., and most—2.7 million—are euthanized each year.

Not only is spaying or neutering the responsible thing to do, it can reduce or eliminate behaviors such as urine marking and aggression. Plus, your pet will be more likely to focus their attention on their human family. But a top reason to spay or neuter is that your pet will live a healthier, longer life! A study found that dogs living in the U.S. states with the highest rates of spaying/neutering are also the states where pets live the longest. Neutered males live 18% longer and spayed females live 23% longer than unneutered or unspayed dogs.

Spaying female dogs and cats before their first heat cycle reduces her risk of uterine infections such as pyometra, uterine cancer, and breast cancer, which can be fatal.

Unneutered males are much more likely to visit our hospital after having been hit by a car, injured in a fight with another male, or contracting other diseases and injuries associated with roaming. Neutering male dogs and cats can help prevent testicular cancer and will also make him less likely to roam, less destructive, and better natured in general than an intact male.

Neutering cats and dogs requires only a short hospitalization and offers lifelong health benefits. Although spays and neuters are generally safe procedures, they should only be performed by a knowledgeable veterinarian who is familiar with your pet and can provide proper follow-up care.



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