

smalltalk

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A HEALTHIER FUTURE

AUTUMN 2017



Lets have a heart to heart

Common types of heart disease



Inside...

Parvovirus

Prevention of this fatal disease in dogs

Deaf Dogs

Different not difficult to care for

Noise Phobias

Ways to alleviate the fear of fireworks

Cardiology Medication

The importance of compliance



Heart disease in dogs

It is estimated that heart problems can affect around **10%** of all dogs in the UK.

Some heart diseases may be present when the animal is born (congenital), however the majority of heart disease in dogs develops during adult life, with some breeds being more likely to develop heart disease than others.

The 2 types of heart disease we see most commonly in the dog are

1) **Dilated cardiomyopathy** - this is a disease of the heart muscle, with the heart muscle becoming thinner and losing its pumping ability. It is most commonly seen in larger breed dogs such as Great Danes, Dobermanns and Boxers.

2) **Degenerative mitral valve disease** - this is by far and the most common form of heart disease in dogs. This can affect any breed of dog but is more commonly seen in smaller dogs. The problem arises when the mitral valve in the heart degenerates and changes shape over time. This valve becomes leaky and causes a heart murmur which can often be heard when the heart beats. This sound may be detected by your vet at a routine examination and can be the first indicator a problem exists. As the valve becomes more "leaky" over time your dog may develop signs of congestive heart failure.



Cavalier King Charles Spaniel

90% have heart disease by the age of 10

90%



All Small Breeds

75% of small breeds have or develop heart disease

75%



Dobermann Pinscher

55% develop heart disease

55%



Boxer

By middle age 50% will have heart disease

50%

Spotting the **signs**



With current medication and regular check ups and adjustments to medication your pet may have several years of good quality life.

How is heart disease **diagnosed:**

If you or your vet suspects that heart disease is causing your pet to be unwell they may advise further tests to work out if heart disease is the problem.

A combination of tests are usually required to diagnose heart disease. These may include Echocardiography (from ultrasound scanning), Xrays, Electrocardiography (an electrical recording of the heart) and blood test.

If my dog has heart disease can my dog be **treated?**

The vast majority of heart disease is treated with oral medication, medication works to improve heart function and reduce pressures that the heart has to work against. Often your dog will be on several medications at once and your vet will be able to best tailor your medication to your pet's needs.



by Malcolm Cobb MA VetMB DVC PhD MBA FHEA MRCVS Pride Veterinary Centre

Cardiology medication

- the importance of compliance



In veterinary medicine, the common causes of heart disease (valve disease and cardiomyopathies), are not curable. In time, in a large proportion of patients with heart disease the disease itself will ultimately lead to heart failure, a clinical syndrome best described as a heart which cannot pump adequate volumes of blood to the tissues.

In the early stages of heart failure, the output of the heart is maintained by a number of compensatory mechanisms, in other words, the heart manages to maintain function even though the disease itself deteriorates. In time however, a rise in blood pressure and fluid retention leads to notable signs of breathing difficulty. Treatment for heart failure is not curative, but it is generally aimed at reducing the congestion and fluid retention which develops.

A variety of drugs are used, the effects of which aim to remove excess fluid and help prevent it developing, and improve heart function. Such drugs include furosemide, angiotensin converting enzyme inhibitors (such as benazepril), Pimobendan and spironolactone.

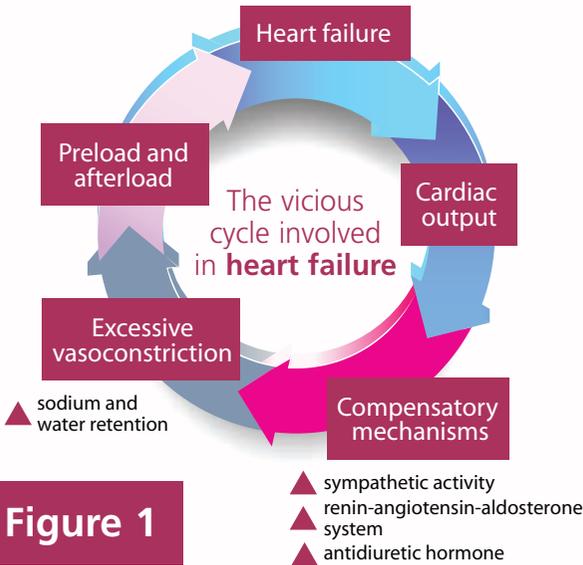


Figure 1



Compliance with prescribed therapy is particularly important in the management of heart failure since it is not a curable condition; it is a long term chronic problem which needs daily therapy to manage the clinical signs. In human medicine, treatment that is ongoing tends to be associated with poorer compliance than short term treatment, and if compliance with heart failure therapy is poor it has been shown in humans to inevitably lead to worsening of the heart failure itself, possibly leading to hospitalisation. In addition, it has been shown that medicating human patients and dogs that are in heart failure with a variety of treatments including Pimobendan and benazepril prolongs life.

Compliance is essentially 'the extent to which owners adhere to instructions when giving prescribed drugs to their animals'. In human medicine, it has been documented that compliance levels range from 5% -96%. The small number of compliance studies that are available in the veterinary literature differ quite substantially in the levels of compliance demonstrated.

One study suggests that only 37% of clients are 100% compliant with prescribed treatment and of these the best compliance was seen in the group of animals being treated for gastrointestinal problems. In veterinary medicine, a study conducted by the American Animal Hospital Association revealed that client compliance is much lower than veterinarians had predicted. The study looked at estimated levels of compliance in small animal practice and concluded that the majority of veterinary practitioners surveyed believed their client adherence levels were as high as 75% when in reality the average rate was found to be 50%. This means that only half of the clients seen in those practices

followed through on the treatments their veterinarians recommended. In studies of compliance with antimicrobial medication, the correct number of doses was given by only 27% of clients and only 7% clients had correctly followed the treatment regime.

The large range in compliance levels shown in these studies offers scope for improvement, but failure to comply with treatment recommendations for a chronic condition like cardiac failure, in which the control of clinical signs requires continuous daily administration of medication, can lead to an inadequate treatment response and in cardiac failure patients, this means the return of life-threatening clinical signs and even death.



Canine
DARVO
virus



a review...

By Raman Coore DVM PhD Cert VOphtal MRCVS
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Parvo virus was first recognised nearly forty years ago and since that time has become a major cause of mortality in young unvaccinated puppies worldwide. Most severe infection is observed in unvaccinated puppies less than twenty weeks of age in which mortality can approach ninety-percent without treatment.

Symptoms

Following infection, the virus targets rapidly dividing cells in the intestine causing profuse haemorrhagic gastroenteritis (vomiting and diarrhoea with blood) within three to seven days but in some cases the virus invades the heart leading to acute heart failure. There will also be fever, abdominal pain, loss of appetite and sometimes sudden death.

Diagnosis

A presumptive diagnosis may be made based on the results of clinical examination. Sometimes testing blood or faecal samples may be necessary. More accurate tests which can identify viral DNA are also available.

Treatment

The main stay of management relies on good supportive therapy and isolation to prevent further spread of the virus. Affected puppies will need to be hospitalised and receive intensive fluid therapy. Antibiotics are often given to prevent and treat secondary infection as well as medication to manage vomiting and nausea.

Isolation is vital to prevent spread of this virus to other puppies. The parvo virus is known to be extremely hardy and can survive for a long time in infected material and on contaminated surfaces for several months. Your vet can advise you on suitable cleaning and disinfection protocols for your home.

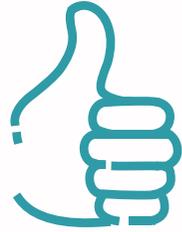
Prevention

An effective vaccine for Parvo virus has been available for over thirty years and has greatly diminished the frequency of outbreaks of disease. Your puppy will receive two or three primary vaccinations starting from around eight weeks of age and given at two or four week intervals. It is recognised that finishing the vaccination course at too young an age may lead to vaccination failure as a result of inhibitory antibodies acquired from the mother's milk which may persist in the puppy beyond 10 weeks of age.

Some breeds notably the black and tan breeds including the Rottweiler and Dobermann are thought to have increased susceptibility to infection and may need additional vaccinations beyond the routine primary course.

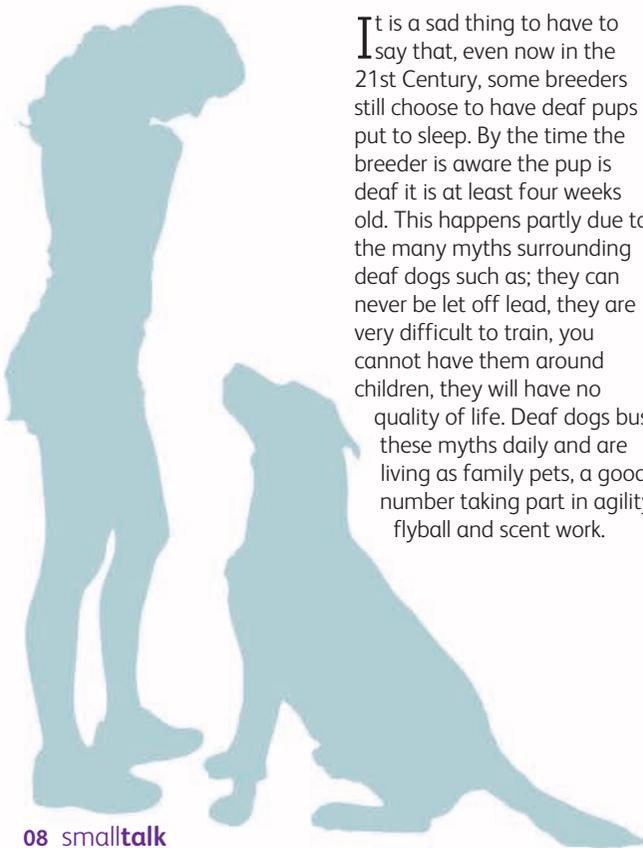
By **Karen Lawe** Co-founder of The Deaf Dog Network

Different not difficult... Deaf Dogs Can Do!



It is a sad thing to have to say that, even now in the 21st Century, some breeders still choose to have deaf pups put to sleep. By the time the breeder is aware the pup is deaf it is at least four weeks old. This happens partly due to the many myths surrounding deaf dogs such as; they can never be let off lead, they are very difficult to train, you cannot have them around children, they will have no quality of life. Deaf dogs bust these myths daily and are living as family pets, a good number taking part in agility, flyball and scent work.

One of the most common questions asked by those who find themselves with a deaf dog is how to communicate - the answer is to use sign language. There is no doggie sign language set out like there is for deaf people so the best signs to use are those which come easily to you and that you can be consistent with. Typically the sign used for 'good' is a thumbs up with a happy, smiley face, a recall could be outstretched arms and a welcoming face, 'no' could be a wagging finger with a disapproving look.





Nothing is set in stone until you teach it to the dog. Teaching a deaf dog to 'check in' with you regularly is a great help when it comes to recall.

Many people find it odd that an owner of a deaf dog will still talk to the dog. Talking to your deaf dog is important as it keeps your body language and facial expressions true which means it is far easier for the dog to understand. Between each other, all dogs read body language it is part of how they communicate. It has to be said that dogs in general are far better at reading us than we are them.

If you are considering bringing a new dog into your life please do not pass by the deaf dogs. There are many in rescues around the UK in search of a home where in most cases it is purely the fact they are deaf which is keeping them from being adopted. Owners of deaf dogs will tell you that the relationship they have is very special, different to that with a dog which has hearing.

“ A common question asked by those who find themselves with a deaf dog is how to communicate - the answer is to use sign language. ”





Noise phobias: fireworks

Phobias are a specific fear, which an animal does not naturally 'get used to'. They NEVER get better on their own.

Repeated exposure to the fearful event just reinforces the problem, resulting in the animal becoming progressively more agitated as time passes. Animals have acute hearing; loud bangs and whistles may even be painful.

Signs that your pet could be afraid and stressed:

- Covering
- Trembling
- Hiding

- Shaking as if your pet has just come out of water
- Restlessness / hyperactivity
- Chewing
- Toileting in inappropriate areas of the house
- Drooling
- Panting
- Excessive vocalisation
- Excessive grooming
- Inability to respond to commands; general disobedience
- Digging in the house
- Tail chasing
- Jumping on to you or the furniture



By Vicky Harrington RVN DipCABT CCAB RQF level 5
Hook Norton Veterinary Group

Ways to alleviate your pet's phobia

Speak to your vet about being referred to a qualified behaviourist to help your pet cope with loud noises and avoid the problem escalating.

Prescription medications, supplements, herbal and pheromone products are available which can help alleviate your pet's phobia. They are intended to be used alongside the measures mentioned opposite and to help your pet to concentrate on an activity they enjoy whilst fireworks are going off; such as a favourite game.

Rabbits, guinea pigs, hamsters, gerbils, mice, ferrets and birds are all easily frightened. We advise owners to:

- Bring hutches and cages into a quiet room indoors, a garage or shed.
- Give them extra bedding to burrow into so it feels safe.
- If you cannot bring your pet's hutch inside, turn it around to face a wall or fence.
- Cover aviaries and hutches with thick blankets or a duvet to block out the sight and deaden the sound. Make sure there is enough ventilation.



- ✓ Keep pets inside your home when fireworks are being let off.
- ✓ If your pet is used to TV or radio sounds, switch them on (not too loudly) to help limit the suddenness and volume of the noises.
- ✓ Let your pet pace, whine, miaow and hide if it wants to. Don't try to coax it out - it's just trying to find safety, and should not be disturbed.
- ✓ **IF** responsive, encourage your pet to play a game or feed favourite foods during the firework displays.
- ✓ Provide an area where it can go to hide such as a crate or den, if that is what they prefer to do. Make it as cosy as possible. Place their bed, food, water and toys in there and use blankets and duvets for noise insulation. Cats also like hiding in areas at different levels of a room.
- ✓ Draw the curtains.
- ✓ Start keeping cats indoors a week before fireworks are due, to get them used to the routine. Don't forget to provide litter trays!
- ✓ Take dogs for a long walk during daylight; mid afternoon would be ideal.
- ✓ **NEVER** walk dogs when fireworks are being let off!
- ✓ Avoid leaving pets alone during upsetting events. If you do, don't get angry with them if they have been destructive after being left alone.
- ✓ Shouting at frightened pets will make them more stressed.
- ✓ Never take dogs to fireworks displays. Even if it doesn't bark or whimper, it doesn't mean it is happy.
- ✓ Ensure they are wearing some form of identification, even in the house, in case they run away.

Cats need all nine lives, as vets treat shocking levels of injuries

Taken from an article in **The British Veterinary Association's (BVA) online newsroom on 08.08.17**

Cats really do need their mythical nine lives, with 90% of vets having treated cats for injuries caused by road traffic accidents, falling from a height and walking on hot surfaces, according to findings from a British Veterinary Association (BVA) survey revealed on International Cat Day

'Cats are agile and adaptable animals, but their nine lives

are a myth. The good news is that cat owners can take some simple steps to protect their pets from the most common accidents and injuries, including using reflective collars, keeping cats indoors overnight, and being careful in the kitchen and with open windows.'

BVA is offering advice to assist owners in keeping their cats as safe as possible:

- Get a reflective collar so that car drivers can see your cat in low light

- Keep your cat indoors at night to help avoid RTAs
- A neutered cat roams less and stays closer to home, lessening the RTA risk
- Make sure windows above the ground floor are not opened wide enough for a cat to fall through
- Keep cats away from the kitchen when cooking and make sure hobs are properly cooled and covered before allowing access again.

wordsearch

NURSE

STROKE

DOBERMANN

TABBY

FISH

WHISKERS

LEAD

LITTER

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