

# DOG HEALTH



## TEETH

It only takes 24 hours for the bacteria in a dog's mouth to turn to tartar. The more they chew on appropriate things like rawhide, greenies, or Nyla-bones, and the like, the better it is for their teeth. Brushing their teeth daily would be ideal, but at least once or twice a week will help. You can use a doggy toothbrush, or a fingertip toothbrush. You only need to brush the top and outside of their teeth and gums, in a circular motion. Use an enzymatic toothpaste. Never use human toothpaste, it contains high levels of fluoride, which is toxic to dogs. Alternatively, you can offer a special type of bone called C.E.T., they come in rawhide or veggie-dent. They should chew these for about 2 minutes per day to help with tartar build up.

Dogs can fracture teeth when chewing on hard bones or antlers. If that occurs, the tooth may need a root canal to be removed. Root canals are usually performed at specialty clinics, like the U of M or Blue Pearl. There is a possibility that the bacteria in the mouth may get into the blood stream, causing a serious infection, if the tooth is left untreated. This may lead to heart or kidney failure.



## EYES

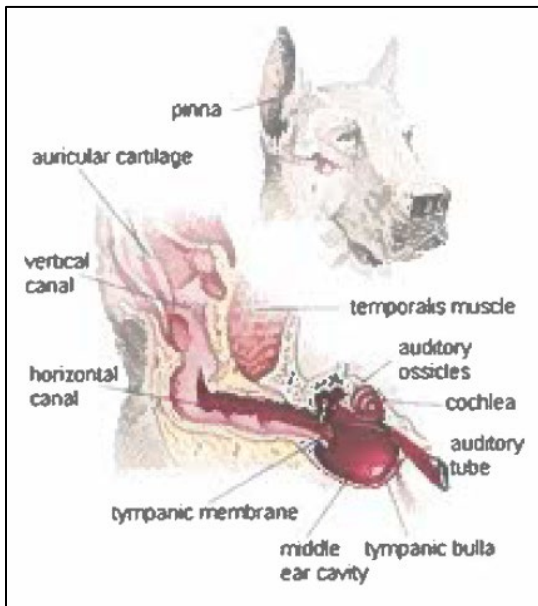
Dogs have 3 eye lids; an upper, a lower, and a clear or whiteish lid. The third lid is where things like dust, dirt or plant seeds can get caught. If you see your dog holding his eye shut, pawing at it, or notice the eye is draining or swollen, chances are great there is something irritating the third lid. You can flush out your dog's eye with normal saline solution like the type used for contacts. This will help wash out the debris. If you cannot remove the irritant, bring your dog in for medical treatment. If the debris is not removed, it may cause ulcers to form, which in turn can lead to permanent blind spots.

Dogs can get glaucoma and cataracts, just like humans. At your dog's annual checkup, the vet will check your dog's eyes for signs of these diseases.

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## EARS



A dog's ear is "L" shaped. Some dogs have ears that stand up, and some have floppy ears. Due to anatomy, the floppy eared dogs get less air flow into the ear. The normal temperature range for a healthy dog is 101-102.5 degrees. The floppy ears will hold in higher temps and moisture, creating the perfect environment for bacteria to grow, causing an ear infection.

Signs of an ear infection include scratching, head shaking, black or yellowish discharge, redness, and a foul odor. An ear infection can be very painful. Please seek medical attention right away. It is recommended that you have the ears rechecked prior to finishing the treatment, to be sure that the infection is gone. If left untreated, an ear infection can cause the cartilage in the ear to turn into bone. There is a surgery to correct this that must be performed by a Board Certified Surgeon. It is very painful and has a long recovery time.

## EAR HEMATOMA

An ear hematoma is a collection of blood and fluids between the skin and the cartilage in the ear. Dogs with chronic ear infections, ear mites or allergies are at greater risk for hematomas. Dogs will scratch their ears or shake their heads when the ears are itchy or painful, which can result in ruptured blood vessels in the ear.

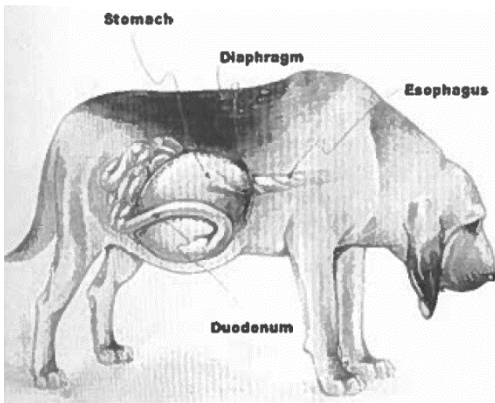
The hematoma can be treated in a several ways, such as surgery, draining, sutures, or it may resolve on its own. The most common are sutures, staples, and placement of drains. Cleaning your dog's ears after a bath, swimming or high humidity days will help prevent ear infections. Use a cleaner that contains Salicylic Acid, a drying agent, like Epi Otic.



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## BLOAT



Bloat is a life-threatening condition caused by food, liquid or gasses getting trapped in the stomach. In some cases, the stomach can turn over itself, cutting off the blood supply. Signs of bloat may include restlessness, drooling, pacing, or attempts to vomit with nothing produced. Your dog may also appear anxious and look at or lick their stomach. He may be short of breath, have a rapid heartbeat, or collapse. The stomach may look swollen. Seek medical attention IMMEDIATELY.

The direct cause of bloat is unknown. Some dog breeds are predisposed over others. Gorging on food is another probable cause. Some ways to help prevent bloat is to feed your dog at least twice a day, not one large meal. Slow the fast eater down, and limit water intake after eating. Also, try to wait 2 hours after vigorous exercise before feeding.

## THE PANCREAS

Like boiled hamburger & rice for a few days. It may require hospitalization with IV fluids. This organ is near the stomach, and aids in food digestion by releasing enzymes, and it helps control blood sugar. When a dog eats rotten or moldy food, or foods high in fat like pork, the pancreas does not secrete the enzymes needed to break those foods down. The organ then becomes inflamed which may cause vomiting, diarrhea, low body temperature, or dehydration. Treatment may be as simple as feeding a bland diet, like boiled hamburger & rice for a few days. It may require hospitalization with IV fluids.

## ANAL GLANDS

The anal glands are located at 10 and 4 o'clock. Dogs release a scent from this gland every time they poop. The opening of the gland is less than half the size of the head of a pin and can get plugged easily. If they cannot release it, the gland will fill up with fluid, and may rupture. The rupture will look like a hemorrhoid. Signs to watch for are scooting their butts on the ground or floor and licking their anus. If, after you have told them to stop, the scooting or licking behaviors continue, they may need to have their anal glands expressed. Your vet or your groomer can do this. If they are plugged, you will need to take your dog to your vet or the emergency hospital. You can also express them yourself. You will need medical gloves, lubricant, and paper towels. Place your Index finger in the anus, feel around for the gland. Once you find it, place your thumb on the outside over the gland, apply pressure and go outward. {A bit like milking a cow.} There can be a lot of pressure built up, so please keep your mouth closed and do not stand directly behind your dog.

# DOG HEALTH



## FEET

The pads on a dog's feet are sensitive, and there are some things you need to pay attention to. Summer and winter have some specific concerns.



### Summer:

A dog's foot pads can burn and blister on hot surfaces. A simple test to determine if a surface is too hot for your dog to walk on is to put your wrist or the back of your hand on the surface. If it is too hot for you to keep your skin on, it is too hot for your dog to walk on. Burns on your dog's feet will require a trip to the ER or your vet for treatment.

Another issue to be aware of in the summer and fall are seeds, stickers, and burrs. These may get in between their toes or pads. If left there, they can cause wounds that will be easily infected.

Check your dog's feet, paying special attention between the toes and pads, after walks or playing outside. Signs there may be something there include licking, biting, chewing, limping, or holding the foot off the ground.

### Winter:

Winter comes with its own set of things to be aware of. While snowballs stuck to their fur may be cute, it should alert you to check their feet. Remove any snow or ice that may be compacted between their toes and pads.

Sidewalk salt and chemicals used to melt ice and snow are toxic to dogs. After playing outdoors or after a walk you need to clean your dog's feet. You can use a wet washcloth to wipe them off, paying special attention to the pads and toes.

During Minnesota winters, we need to be as aware of frostbite on our dogs as we are on ourselves. Signs to watch for would include holding a foot or feet off the ground as much as possible, looking anxious, licking the foot, or laying on their side so the bottoms of their feet do not touch the ground. This is a very serious injury and will require a trip to your vet or the ER. Severe frostbite can lead to permanent damage and even amputation. *Do not rub the feet or put them in water.*

These are a few of the health issues every dog owner should be aware of. There are a number of websites that will give you great advice on good vs bad foods and treats for your dog.

If you have any concerns regarding your dog's health, or possible injuries, it is always better to err on the side of caution and take your dog to the vet or emergency clinic.