



Always consult with a veterinarian that you feel comfortable with before diagnosing or treating any disease on your own. This information is for reference only.

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Cerebellar Hypoplasia

Issue Description

The cerebellum is the part of the brain that regulates the control and coordination of movement. In this condition, the cells of the cerebellum do not mature normally before birth, causing clinical signs relating to poor balance and incoordination.

Breeds At Risk

The incidence for cerebellar hypoplasia is higher in the Irish Setter, Whire-Haired Fox Terrier, Boston Terrier, Bull Terrier, and Chow-Chow.

Causes

There are several bacterial infections and viral infections such as feline panleukopenia, that can result in the disorder in both cats and dogs. However, the disease can also be caused by malnutrition, poisoning, injury or general accidents during development in the fetus.

Symptoms

Usually symptoms of cerebellar hypoplasia can be seen immediately at birth in cats, but sometimes can take two months or so to become apparent in dogs. Cerebellar hypoplasia causes jerky movements, tremors and generally uncoordinated motion. The animal often falls down and has trouble walking. Tremors increase when the animal is excited and subside when at ease.

The disease does not get better or worse with age, but the cat or dog can usually learn to somewhat compensate for it and should have a normal lifespan. Most afflicted animals can lead a fairly normal life if special considerations for the animal's disability are taken by the pet's owner.

Diagnosis

The clinical signs (relating to uncoordinated movement and lack of balance) are suggestive of a cerebellar disorder. Your veterinarian will do tests to rule out other conditions that can cause similar signs.

Treatment

There is no treatment for this condition. Affected dogs will not get any worse (or better) and, especially where the signs are mild, may be able to lead a relatively normal life, particularly if owners can adjust their expectations to the dog's limitations.

Breeding Advice

If a dog is born with Cerebellar hypoplasia, its parents and siblings should ideally not be used for breeding since Cerebellar hypoplasia can be inherited. The affected dog should naturally also not be allowed to breed. The exact mode of inheritance is still not fully understood, but some evidence point towards an autosomal recessive mode of inheritance.

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