



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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Dancing Doberman Disease

Issue Description

A simple description of DDD is one of a progressive disease, usually first involving the holding up of one rear leg while the dog is standing. Over several months the condition advances with a wasting of the rear leg muscles and a more constant shifting of weight on the rear legs that resembles a dog "dancing". Frequently these dogs will knuckle over with their rear paws and ultimately prefer to sit or lie down rather than stand.

Other Names

DDD

Causes

Because the disorder is not known to exist in any other animal, let alone another breed of dog, there is the presumption that genetics must play a role in DDD.

Symptoms

The first symptoms of Dancing Doberman Disease normally appear when the dog is 6-7 months old, but the age of onset can vary from just 4 months to up to 10 years. When the dog is standing, one of its rear legs will suddenly flex. Over the course of the following months, the problem will usually start affecting the other hind leg as well. A dog with Dancing Doberman Disease can end up alternatively flexing and extending each rear leg and this behaviour is the reason behind the name of this health problem. Many dogs will start knuckling over their rear paws and some dogs will eventually avoid standing all together; they will prefer to lie or sit. They can however still be perfectly capable of running around. There is no signs of pain associated with Dancing Doberman Disease.

Diagnosis

The disease can mimic many other conditions such as lumbosacral disc disease, cervical vertebral instability (CVI), inflammation of the spinal cord, spinal arthritis, cauda equina syndrome, some nervous system maladies, and spinal tumors. It is likely the condition is more prevalent than previously recognized because there is a general lack of awareness on the part of veterinarians and breeders, and therefore, the condition is often overlooked as a diagnosis.

Treatment

Unfortunately, there is no know cure or treatment for Dancing Doberman Disease. On the positive side, most dogs with DDD live to be as old as any other Doberman and the condition appears to be completely painless for the dog. A majority of the affected dogs can still walk. Dancing Doberman Disease is however a progressing disease that will cause increasingly weak legs and muscle atrophy.

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