



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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## Heart Valve Dysplasia

### Issue Description

Heart valve dysplasia is a congenital heart defect which in dogs and cats affects the aortic, pulmonary, mitral, and tricuspid heart valves.

### Causes

The cause is unknown, but genetics play a large role.

### Symptoms

The disease and symptoms are similar to progression of acquired valve disease in older dogs. Valve leakage leads to heart enlargement, arrhythmias, and congestive heart failure. Heart valve dysplasia can be tolerated for years or progress to heart failure in the first year of life. Diagnosis is with an echocardiogram. There is a poor prognosis with significant heart enlargement.

### Diagnosis

Your veterinarian may detect a heart murmur before your dog is showing any signs associated with mitral valve disease. Further investigation by radiographs and electrocardiogram may reveal some of the changes that occur in the heart over time, as it works harder to compensate for the insufficiency of the valve. These changes may include enlargement of the sides of the heart affected, enlargement of blood vessels in the lungs, and cardiac arrhythmias.

### Treatment

It may be many years before heart disease develops. If and when it does, your veterinarian can recommend several medical therapies to ease life for your dog. Depending on the stage of heart disease, these may include a special sodium-restricted diet, exercise restriction, diuretics to reduce fluid build-up, and medication to support the failing heart.

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