



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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Panosteitis

Issue Description

Panosteitis, also known as "wandering lameness" or "growing pains", is a spontaneously occurring lameness that usually affects large dogs. This disease usually occurs in dogs between the ages of 5 to 14 months, and affects males more often than females. In most cases the lameness occurs suddenly, without a history of trauma. Most often one or the other front leg is affected first, then without warning the symptoms will shift from leg to leg. Symptoms may appear to improve and then worsen in a nearly cyclic manner.

Other Names

Enostosis, Eosinophilic Panosteitis, Wandering Lameness, Growing Pains

Causes

The cause is unknown, but genetics, stress, infection, metabolism, or an autoimmune component may be factors. It has also been suggested that rapid growth and high-protein food are involved in the pathogenesis. Pano is associated with large breed dogs and usually occurs in dogs 5 to 12 months of age, although it has been found in dogs as old as 5 years. It most commonly affects males by a ratio of 4:1. Females are most often affected around their first heat. It is possible that the condition is partially genetic since so many German Shepherd Dogs are prone to it. However, many other factors have been associated with pano: diet, viral diseases, autoimmune problems, hyperestrogen, and vascular problems.

Symptoms

The humerus is most commonly affected. Males are more commonly affected than females. The dog normally limps on the affected limb and only rarely holds the limb to prevent any weight from being placed on it.

Diagnosis

Diagnosis is made by pain on palpation of the long bones of the limbs. X-rays may show an increased density in the medullary cavity of the affected bones, often near the nutrient foramen (where the blood vessels enter the bone). This evidence may not be present for up to ten days after lameness begins.

Treatment

Pain medication and exercise restriction can help to relieve the symptoms, and the lameness usually goes away after days to weeks without additional treatment. Recurrences up to the age of two years may occur. Larger breeds, such as German Shepherd Dogs, Golden Retrievers, Basset Hounds, Dobermanns, Labrador Retrievers, and Rottweilers, are more prone to this problem. There has been one suspected case of panosteitis in a fast-growing six month old camel with a shifting leg lameness.

Prevention

The best thing that an owner of a growing pup can do is to choose a high quality dog food, or a carefully planned natural diet, which does not have too much calcium, nor too high a percentage of protein. Recent studies show that the balance of calcium and phosphorus is the most important dietary consideration for a growing puppy followed closely by the amounts of protein and fat. Most breeders recommend a maximum of 26% protein and others like to see the pup switched to an adult formula by the age of 4 months. Diet may be the single most important aspect of puppy development (especially when coupled with exercise) under an owner's control. Listen carefully to your breeder's recommendations, they usually know what suits their lines best.

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