



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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Scotty Cramp

Issue Description

Scotty Cramp is a disease in Scottish Terriers causing spasms and hyperflexion and hyperextension of the legs.

Causes

It is caused by a disorder in serotonin metabolism that causes a deficiency of available serotonin. It is inherited as an autosomal recessive trait.

Symptoms

Scotty Cramp occurs in puppies and young dogs. Symptoms present after exercise or excitement and last a few minutes. A goose-stepping gait and arched spine are often seen, and the dogs may turn somersaults as it runs. The symptoms usually resolve after ten minutes, but they may repeat several times in a day. The condition does progress as the dog ages.

Diagnosis

Scotty cramp distinguished on basis of family history, typical clinical signs with no loss of consciousness, and induction of signs with serotonin antagonists.

Clinical signs may be induced with serotonin antagonist methysergide.

Treatment

There are several factors which affect the severity and frequency of hyperkinetic episodes. These include your dog's environment, his/her general health, genetic differences, and factors that modify your dog's behavior. If you and your veterinarian can identify the conditions or behaviors that bring on Scotty Cramp in your dog, you can reduce the frequency by avoiding certain situations or stimuli, or by behavioral conditioning to reduce associated anxiety. Behavioral and environmental modification are often sufficient to reduce or eliminate episodes of Scotty cramp. When necessary, diazepam is used to treat severe episodes, and it can also be used for prevention in a situation where a dog is likely to experience clinical signs. Vitamin E can also be used to reduce the frequency of episodes.

Care and Prevention

Administer all medication and institute environmental changes as directed by your veterinarian. Avoid certain medications, such as aspirin and penicillin, as they may worsen signs.

Do not breed affected animals and do not repeat breeding the sire and dam (pair) that produced the affected offspring.

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