



# Vaginal Prolapse and Vaginitis in Dogs

## Vaginal Prolapse in Dogs

- Vaginal prolapse is the protrusion of swollen vaginal tissue through the vulva, the external female genital organ, during the heat cycle.
- In vaginal prolapse, the swollen protruding vaginal tissue may resemble that of a donut shaped mass. Sometimes the mass is mistaken as a tumor.
- Vaginal prolapse is seen mostly in young female dogs of the larger breeds that have not been spayed. Some of the causes of vaginal prolapse are estrogen stimulation, vaginal hyperplasia, or a general genetic predisposition.
- Prolonged straining, such as difficult labor and delivery or anorectal obstructions, is another common cause of prolapse.

## Symptoms of Vaginal Prolapse

Some of the symptoms of vaginal prolapse may be painful urination, excessive licking of the vaginal area, the inability to breed, or a protruding mass through the vulva.

- Excessive licking of the vulva
- Painful urination
- Protruding mass from the vulva
- trouble with breeding

## **Treatments for Vaginal Prolapse**

- The treatment for vaginal prolapse is a urinary catheter if the dog cannot urinate, antihemorrhoidal creams for the prolapsed tissue, or hormonal treatment to bring on ovulation.
- The veterinarian may also be able to suture the mass back into the vagina until it subsides when the heat cycle is complete and then surgically remove dead tissue to prevent hyperplasia from happening again.
- However, even if the dog is treated for vaginal prolapse, about two thirds of dogs with this condition will have a reoccurrence on their next heat cycle unless the dog is spayed.
- Getting your dog spayed eliminates the problem entirely.

## **What is vaginitis?**

*Vaginitis* is the medical term referring to inflammation of the vagina or vestibule.

## **What are the clinical signs of vaginitis?**

The most common clinical signs of vaginitis include discharge from the vulva, increased frequency of urination, licking of the vaginal area, vaginal discharges of blood, mucus, or pus, and scooting or rubbing the vaginal area. The vagina will often appear red and swollen. Vaginitis can appear in any female, spayed or intact, and at any age. Male dogs are often attracted to females with vaginitis.

## **What causes vaginitis?**

There are numerous causes of vaginitis, including:

- Prepubertal vaginitis
- Urinary tract infections
- Vaginal trauma
- Foreign bodies
- Urine or fecal contamination of the vulva
- Ectopic ureter
- Urinary incontinence
- Vaginal tumors - especially transmissible venereal tumors and leiomyomas
- Infection - bacterial or viral
- Vaginal hematomas or abscesses

- Congenital anatomical abnormalities

### **How will the cause of my dog's vaginitis be diagnosed?**

Diagnosis is most often based on medical history and clinical signs. Diagnostic tests include blood and urine tests, urine culture and antibiotic sensitivity tests, vaginal cultures, vaginoscopy and vaginal cytology studies.

### **How is vaginitis treated?**

Treatment is based on the specific cause of your pet's condition. Most pets receive antibiotics and twice daily vaginal douches (0.05% chlorhexidine or 0.5% povidone-iodine solutions). Your veterinarian will develop a precise treatment plan for your pet's individual needs.

### **What is the prognosis for a dog diagnosed with vaginitis?**

Most cases of vaginitis respond well to conservative treatment. Many patients return to normal within two to three weeks of initiating treatment. Most cases of prepubertal vaginitis resolve after the first "heat" cycle and further treatment such is not needed. Adult patients often benefit from spaying if they are still intact. In chronic cases or patients with anatomical abnormalities, the prognosis is dependent on the severity and duration of the condition. Surgery may be indicated in severe or complicated cases.