

GASTRIC DILATATION-VOLVULUS (GDV OR "BLOAT") DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS



Your dog has been diagnosed with **gastric dilatation and volvulus (GDV)**—a life-threatening emergency in which the stomach becomes severely distended with gas and food and then twists (volvulus) 180 to 360 degrees on its axis.

This twist prevents the contents of the stomach from escaping and severely compromises blood flow to the stomach and other vital organs.

Emergency Surgery and Stabilisation

Surgical correction is the only effective treatment for GDV. The goals of surgery are:

- **Decompressing and untwisting the stomach**
- **Assessing stomach and spleen health**
- **Securing the stomach to the abdominal wall** (gastropexy) to help prevent recurrence
- **Removing the spleen**, if it has been damaged or its blood supply compromised

Prior to surgery, your dog will have been stabilised with **IV fluids, oxygen support, and pain relief**. Surgery is typically performed urgently—within an hour of presentation.

Recovery and Hospitalisation

- Most dogs are hospitalised for **2 to 5 days** post-surgery.
- The average **survival rate is around 80%**, but this depends on the severity of the case and presence of complications.
- Intensive monitoring will continue throughout your pet's recovery.

Possible Complications

Although surgery can be lifesaving, GDV is a serious condition with potential complications:

- **Anaesthetic risk:** Dogs with GDV are often in shock and have low blood pressure. This increases the risk of anaesthetic complications, despite careful monitoring and protocols.
- **Cardiac arrhythmias:** Abnormal heart rhythms are common after GDV surgery, especially within the first 72 hours. These are often self-limiting but occasionally need treatment.
- **Aspiration pneumonia:** Vomited or refluxed material during surgery can enter the lungs. This may cause pneumonia, which can delay recovery and require additional treatment.
- **Sepsis and systemic inflammatory response syndrome (SIRS):** These serious conditions may cause fever, abnormal white cell counts, difficulty breathing, poor clotting, and organ dysfunction. Though rare, they are often life-threatening.
- **Gastric necrosis (tissue death):** If parts of the stomach have lost blood supply, they may need to be surgically removed. In some cases, apparently healthy tissue at surgery may later deteriorate and perforate, leading to peritonitis. This often occurs 2–3 days post-op and is frequently fatal.
- **Splenic damage or removal:** The spleen is closely connected to the stomach, and twisting may tear blood vessels or damage the spleen, leading to internal bleeding. Some dogs may require a **splenectomy** (removal of the spleen) and possibly a **blood transfusion**.

Long-Term Outlook and Prevention

- After successful surgery and recovery, most dogs return to a normal life.
- A **gastropexy** significantly reduces the risk of recurrence, but **GDV can still rarely occur**, so ongoing vigilance is essential.

Watch for These Signs and Seek Immediate Veterinary Attention if You Notice:

- Retching or unproductive vomiting
- Sudden bloating or abdominal swelling
- Pacing, agitation, or restlessness
- Weakness or collapse
- Excessive drooling or panting
- Refusal to eat or drink



Thank you for trusting us with your pet's care during this critical emergency. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or concerns during the recovery process.

Prompt attention to any post-operative issues will give your dog the best chance at a full recovery!