

Tracheal Collapse

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Overview

Tracheal collapse is a syndrome in which the trachea (windpipe) collapses which causes an airway obstruction. It is a commonly encountered cause of airway obstruction and coughing in the dog. The exact cause remains unknown, although there may be many factors involved. The most likely cause is abnormal synthesis of the cartilage that is part of the structure of the trachea (windpipe). The disease causes dogs to cough in spasms.

Either sex may be affected, although it is almost always a disease of toy breeds. Yorkshire terriers are the most commonly affected, but Pomeranians, Chihuahuas, poodles and Maltese are also predisposed. It may affect dogs of any age, although the average age at which clinical signs first appear is six or seven years.

Diagnosis and Treatment Notes:

- Tracheal collapse is generally diagnosed by physical examination and history and chest x-rays. Tests to visualize the trachea may be recommended including fluoroscopy or tracheobronchoscopy.
- Treatment depends on the severity of the disease, your individual pet, and your veterinarian. In an emergency situation, dogs with tracheal collapse are treated with oxygen, steroids, cough suppressants and sedation. Long term treatment may involve airway dilators, steroid, antibiotics and cough suppressants. Some dogs may benefit from surgery to reconstruct part of the trachea. Discuss treatment details when your pet is diagnosed with this condition.

What to Watch for*:

- Dry cough (goose honk)
- Exercise intolerance
- Gagging
- Respiratory difficulty

**Please notify us if you notice any of the above signs or if you have any questions!*