

Trouble Breathing

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Overview

Respiratory distress is labored, difficult breathing or shortness of breath that can occur at any time during the breathing process, during inspiration (breathing in) or expiration (breathing out). When your pet has trouble breathing, it may be difficult to get enough oxygen to the tissues.

Trouble breathing may be associated with accumulation of fluid in the lungs or the chest cavity, heart disease, lung disease, infections, pneumonia, weakened trachea, cancer, trauma or obstructions that occlude the airway. Some breeds are predisposed to breathing problems, such as pugs and bulldogs

Diagnosis and Treatment Notes:

- Trouble breathing is typically diagnosed through history and physical examination findings. Determining the cause of the breathing problem requires further testing such as bloodwork, chest x-rays, chest ultrasound, blood pressure measurement and electrocardiogram (EKG).
- Treatment depends on the underlying disorder, severity of the disease, your individual pet, and your veterinarian. Treatment may include oxygen therapy, antibiotics, chest taps to drain fluid from the chest, and/or medications to reduce fluid accumulation (diuretics) or to treat heart disease. Discuss treatment details when your pet is evaluated and the underlying condition causing the trouble breathing is diagnosed.

What to Watch for*:

- Coughing
- Shortness of breath
- Difficulty breathing
- Weight loss
- Fatigue

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