



Splenic Torsion

Associated Terms:

Twisted Spleen



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Overview:

Splenic torsion occurs when the spleen rotates/twists thus preventing blood drainage, causing subsequent enlargement of the spleen. It occurs in large and giant breed dogs (e.g., Great Danes and German Shepherds) with a deep-chested conformation. It may occur on its own or in combination with [gastric dilatation-volvulus \(GDV\)](#). Rolling, retching, and exercise may increase the spleen's ability to move, along with stretching of the ligaments that normally stabilize the spleen, resulting in twisting of the spleen.

Signs and Symptoms:

Splenic torsion can be an acute condition manifested with pain and collapse or it may be more chronic and associated with non-specific signs such as:

- intermittent abdominal pain
- vomiting
- inappetence
- abdominal distension
- weight loss
- excessive drinking and urination

Diagnostics:

Abdominal radiographs and ultrasound are extremely useful in confirming the diagnosis of splenic torsion. Other tests that may be required include blood and urine analysis. In certain cases, an exploratory surgery may be required to obtain the diagnosis.

Treatment:

Patients are stabilized prior to surgery with fluid therapy and blood if necessary. Surgical removal of the spleen is then performed (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Splenic torsion. Note the twisting of the vascular pedicle of the spleen and the engorgement of the spleen with entrapped blood.

Aftercare and Outcome:

Your dog will need to be restricted to leash walks only for two weeks after surgery. Your dog may need to wear an E-collar or t-shirt to prevent self-trauma to the surgical site. Complications from surgery may include cardiac arrhythmias, ongoing bleeding, pancreatitis (associated with vomiting), and infection although the **overall prognosis is good.**

This Animal Health Topic was written by and reviewed by Diplomates of the American College of Veterinary Surgeons. Any opinions stated in this article are not necessarily the official position of the American College of Veterinary Surgeons.

The American College of Veterinary Surgeons recommends contacting an ACVS board-certified veterinary surgeon or your general veterinarian for more information about this topic.

To find an ACVS Diplomate, visit www.acvs.org/find-a-surgeon.

Small Animal Health Topic Feedback Form

For questions about your animal's specific condition, please contact an [ACVS board-certified surgeon in your area](#).

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