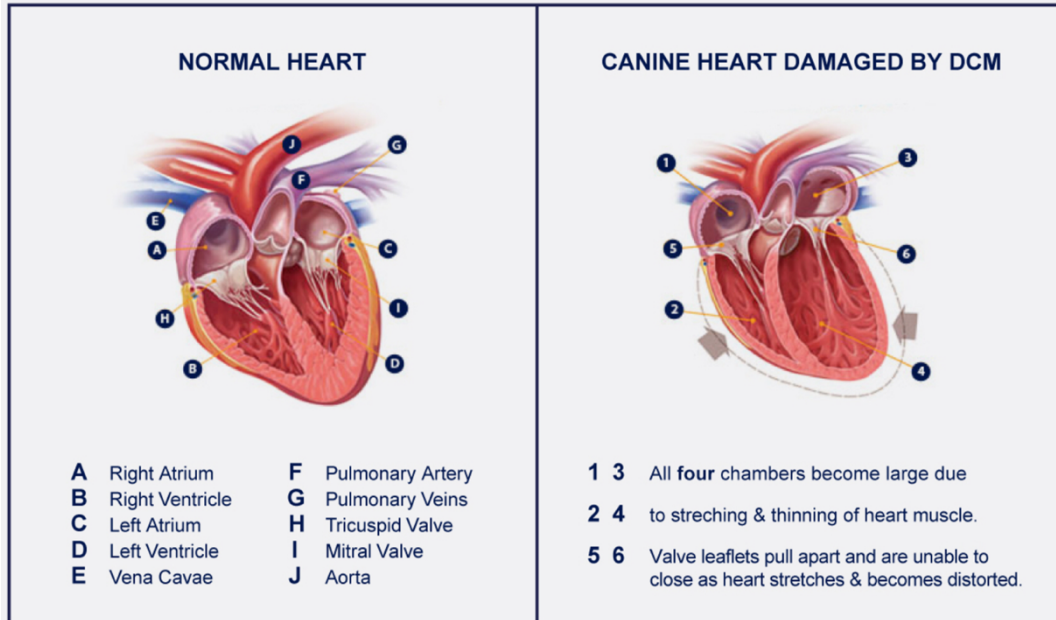


DCM – Dilated Cardiomyopathy

What is DCM (Dilated Cardiomyopathy)?

DCM is a disease that results in the muscle of the heart becoming thinner and weakened. The pressure inside the heart stretches the weakened walls, resulting in an enlarged heart. In most cases DCM is a genetic disease, but there are some cases, poor diet, certain medications or toxins have affected the heart.



Which breeds are most at risk?

DCM is most commonly seen in large and giant breed dogs like Great Danes, Dobermans and Irish Wolfhounds, but it can also occur in smaller breeds.

What are the symptoms?	How is DCM diagnosed?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low energy • Exercise intolerance • Breathlessness • Collapse/ fainting • Coughing • Decreased appetite • Weight loss • Distended Belly • Sudden death 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Auscultation - Listen with stethoscope for murmurs. • ECG to check heart rhythm and electrical activity. • Ultrasound scan to check for enlarged heart and thinning walls. • X-ray to check for enlarged heart and fluid on lungs • ProBNP blood tests to measure specific protein levels. • Holter monitor to monitor heart rhythm for abnormal heart beats.

How can it be treated?

Your vet will advise the best treatment for your dog, but here are a few of the possibilities:

- Diuretics can be given to stimulate the kidneys to remove excess fluid from the body.
- ACE inhibitors work by lowering blood pressure and reduce the resistance of blood flowing out of the heart.
- Anti-arrhythmic drugs to control arrhythmias.
- Bronchodilators make breathing easier.
- Inodilators such as pimobendan to lower pressure in veins and improve heart strength.
- Supplements for the heart such as taurine and certain fish oils (with veterinary advice).

What is the prognosis?

Unfortunately, it is difficult to predict. If detected and treated early, your dog could live a relatively normal life for several years, but sadly, some only live for a short time.