

Signs of Illness in Dogs

When to Call Your Veterinarian

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Sometimes, it may be difficult to tell if a dog is sick or injured. Our dogs cannot communicate with us in words, so we must rely on their actions and attitudes to guide us. You know your own dog better than anyone else, so you may be the first to notice that something is wrong. However, family and friends who do not see your dog every day may notice subtle changes that need to be addressed. Establish a good relationship with your vet so you are more comfortable calling when something comes up. Here are some signs to watch for that might indicate the need for veterinary attention. Please note that this is not a complete list. If your pet exhibits any signs that do not seem normal, call your vet right away.

Immediately contact your veterinarian or go to an emergency clinic if you observe any of the following signs:

- Blue, white or very pale gums
- Labored breathing
- Collapse or loss of consciousness
- Dizziness, imbalance, or circling
- Inability to walk
- Extremely bloated abdomen
- Seizures
- Signs of acute severe pain (such as crying out very loudly and excessively)
- Body temperature over 104 or under 99 (normal is typically 100.5-102.5)

Contact your veterinarian if you notice any of the following signs lasting more than one to two days:

- Poor Appetite
- Lethargy
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Lameness
- Weakness
- Excessive salivation
- Excessive thirst (increased water intake)
- Frequent and/or inappropriate urination
- Constipation
- Excessive scratching or dull, dry, or flaky hair coat
- Wheezing or frequent panting
- Nasal discharge or congestion

- Displays of mild to moderate pain (such as crying when a specific area is touched or action is taken)

In general, you should contact your vet if you notice any signs that you deem abnormal for your dog. It is better to be cautious than to wait. In some cases, your vet may be able to tell you if something does not need to be addressed right away. In other situations, your vet may advise you to make an appointment or to go to an emergency clinic, depending on the urgency. Above all, follow your veterinarian's advice.