2009 WINTER EDITION

GRREAT foster homes

GRREAT BEGINNINGS LEAD TO HAPPY ENDINGS

Emergency Policy

If your GRREAT Foster Dog is in a "life or death" situation, you must seek emergency medical attention to get the dog stabilized. Prior authorization is not needed to seek emergency care. Please call either Jessie 301-503-3963 or Erin 410-231-2096 within 24 hours of the event. Ask your POC for more details.

GRREAT HOTLINE:
703-620-6593

GDV=Get Dog (to the) Vet FAST

GDV (Gastric Dilatation Volvulus), commonly called bloat, is a life-threatening emergency that typically affects deep-chested, middle-aged, healthy, active dogs. Early recognition of the symptoms and immediate veterinary treatment are the keys to survival.

Identifying Bloat by Lucinda Twining

When a dog has GDV, the stomach actually twists on its long axis closing off the esophagus and intestines; trapping gas and fluids in the stomach which becomes distended and extremely painful. At the same time, the blood supply is cut off to the stomach and intestines and those tissues begin to die. If there is the slightest suspicion that a dog has GDV, take him/her to the vet immediately as time is of the essence – there is nearly a 50% mortality rate for dogs with this condition. The sooner treatment is started the better the chances of survival.

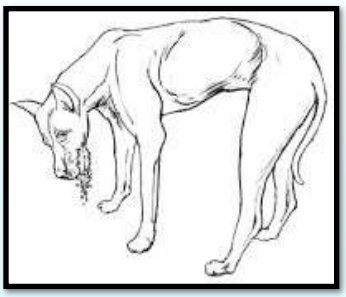
Louie 08-149 Victim of Bloat

In the early stages of GDV, the dog may appear lethargic, walk with a stiff-legged gait, hang his head and seem uncomfortable but may not seem particularly anxious or agitated. At this stage his abdomen may not be distended, but may feel slightly tight. As the condition progresses, the signs may include restlessness, abdominal swelling and discomfort, rapid breathing, repeated attempts to vomit with no result and excessive drooling. If the condition continues without treatment, the dog will begin to show signs of impending shock;

Adoption Days	March 7	April 4	May 2	June 6
	Bel Air MD	Alexandria VA	Annapolis MD	Herndon VA

Know the Signs of Bloat (cont'd)

rapid & labored breathing, pale gums, rapid heart rate, weak pulse, weakness, collapse and death.



While the exact cause of GDV has not been determined it does tend to primarily affect large (over 50 pounds) deep-chested dogs including Boxers, German Shepherds, Great Danes, Irish and Gordon Setters, Standard Poodles, Saint Bernards, Labrador Retrievers, and unfortunately, our beloved Golden among others. Although not as common, it can occur in medium-sized and even small dogs. The incidences of GDV increase with age, being most common in dogs 7 – 10 years old. Other possible contributing factors are stress, feeding a single large meal each day, strenuous exercise too soon after a meal and there is a possibility that the predisposition to develop GDV could be genetically transmitted.

So, what can you do to lessen the possibility of your dog or foster dog developing GDV? Here are some suggested practices:

- Instead of a large single serving of food each day, divide the food into at least two, but ideally three, equal meals.
- Avoid dry dog foods that contain fat in the first 4 ingredients or citric acid on the label.
- Never allow the dog to drink large amounts of water all at once, particularly just before or right after a meal.
- Do not use a raised food bowl. Once upon a time, raised bowls were recommended as a way to prevent GDV, but research has found that they can actually increase rather than decrease the chance of GDV.
- Avoid strenuous exercise soon after a meal.

If you even suspect your dog or foster dog may have GDV, remember, GDV = Get Dog {to the} Vet --- FAST!!!

Dog Collars

by Mary Collings, Intake Coordinator

When choosing the right collar for your dog, remember that not every collar is right for every dog. Below are pros and cons for some of the more commonly used collars. It's important to remember that no matter what collar you choose for your 4-legged friend, be sure to securely attach an ID tag to the collar with your name, your dog's name, and your phone number! Not everyone who finds a lost dog knows to get the dog scanned to check for a microchip, so the ID tag could be your dog's only ticket home.

Be sure that your dog's collar is snug enough that he/she cannot "back out" of it while on a leash. A good rule to remember is that you should be able to slide two of your fingers between the collar and back of your dog's neck easily. Check the collar often to make sure it still fits well since some collars can stretch over time.

Nylon Collar

A nylon collar is your best choice for everyday wear. Not only is it comfortable, but all necessary identification can be easily secured to this type of collar. If your dog pulls on the leash, use a different type of collar (or couple this collar with a harness) when training with your dog, as a nylon collar can pull on your dog's neck too much.

"Choke" Chain

A choke chain is NOT recommended for everyday wear on your dog. A choke chain can get caught on something easily and could result in injury or death to your dog. Even playing with another dog could result in serious injury -- if the choke chain gets caught in the other dog's mouth, you could end up with 2 injured dogs. If you're using a choke chain for training purposes, you need to be careful that you're not pulling so hard that you end up pinching the skin on your dog's neck. Always remove the choke chain when your training session is completed.

"Pinch/Prong" Collar

Most people bristle at the mere mention of this type of collar. However, if it's used correctly, it can be an invaluable training tool and can get even the wildest dog to walk quietly on a leash. A big caution on this type of collar is to never pull too hard and never jerk on the leash when your dog's wearing this collar, as it can result in injury to your dog. This collar should only be used while training and should be promptly removed when your training sessions are completed.

Leather or Suede Collar

While nice to look at, this type of collar has mostly negatives. It can stretch out over time and your dog could easily slip out of it, the material can get very hard after it's gotten wet and then dried, and it could be irritating to your dog's skin. Just like a pair of our new leather shoes, most leather collars take time to soften up and can be quite uncomfortable for your dog until they do.

Help! We Lost Our Foster Golden!

Do you know exactly what to do if your GRREAT Foster Golden gets away from you and runs away? Follow these tips and be prepared. Rip out & attach to the fridge!

As soon as your Foster Dog arrives, please remove any tags with the previous owners information. Your GRREAT foster should only have a GRREAT ID tag, a tag with your contact info and their microchip tag. Rabies tags are only to be kept, if the dog has been vaccinated while in GRREAT. The old Rabies tags can lead back to the give up family.

- **Remove all tags with give up information**
- **Attach GRREAT ID tag and your own tag with your contact info**
- **NEVER allow your GRREAT foster dog to be off-leash without a secure fence**
- **Get the dog microchipped ASAP**
- **Call the Hotline 703-620-6593, option 7 ASAP if the dog is lost**
- **Call Jessie 301-503-3963 and Erin 410-231-2096**

A New Addition to the POC Team

Franco 07-213

LONA GORDON, POC

I was first introduced to GRREAT though web searches for Golden Retriever rescues in the Northern Virginia area. After finding the GRREAT website, I viewed the available dog's and GRREAT calendar webpage at least twice a week before becoming a volunteer. I started volunteering with GRREAT in 2007 by assisting with the GRREAT education tables, adoption days and transports. I eventually became interested in fostering.

I fostered my first Golden in November 2007. As a new foster home, I was given the opportunity to provide lots of TLC to a wonderful Golden named Franco. He suffered from every allergy you can imagine and more – not to mention he had almost no fur. After six months of the royal canine treatment, Mr. Franco became my first foster failure. After all the joy I received from fostering Franco, I plan to open my home to another Golden in the near future.

I joined the POC team because I wanted to have a hand in helping other Goldens in need. I have learned so much from the team and I am looking forward to sharing that knowledge with my foster homes.

Coordinator's Corner

by Erin Ledbetter, Foster Home Coordinator
GRREAT-FHC@comcast.net

Happy New Year foster homes! I hope each of you had wonderful holidays with your Goldens. We had an amazing year in 2008 bringing in 229 new Goldens to the GRREAT organization while placing 216 into their forever homes. Thanks to you, our boarding fees continue to decrease and the cost per dog has gone down by roughly $300 from August to December. We hit the ground running in 2009 by welcoming 10 puppies on New Years Day. Please continue to spread the word to friends and family about how wonderful it is to help an abandoned Golden flourish and find their forever family.

G O A L S F O R 2 0 0 9

- We are striving to have 100% of our Foster dogs microchipped prior to being adopted. We are training new microchippers to service even more of GRREAT's enormous coverage area.
- We need to make sure that 100% of GRREAT foster dogs are neutered/spayed prior to being adopted. If a previous surgery has no documentation, we will need a GRREAT vet to certify in writing or verify by surgery that the altering surgery has taken place.
- We are strongly discouraging the use of any Hill's Science Diet & Hill's Prescription dog food among our Foster population due to poor quality ingredients. There is always a better option even when a prescription diet is needed, and I will personally help you find the right food and/or supplements. We need to try to eliminate corn, wheat, soy, fillers and by-products from our Goldens' diets while also being mindful of known carcinogenic preservatives like BHT and BHA.
- We need your help in continuing to watch the bottom line. When you are prescribed meds for your foster dog that are also human medications please check with your local drugstore, Costco or Wal-Mart instead of filling it at your vet. As an example I recently saved $36 by filling a Rx for 30 Tramadol at Wal-Mart instead of at my vet. Giant and Safeway are even filling antibiotics free for a limited time, check with your POC for more info on that.

As I write this article we have taken in 37 dogs and have 2 waiting to come in. Last year's numbers show that it pretty much stays busy all year long, so please stay in touch with me and foster when you can. In 2008 twenty-three of our foster homes fostered 41% or 91 dogs, and as you can imagine that's a lot to ask of the same people. If every single foster home fostered just one Golden per year, then we would only need half of you to foster a second time in that same year. As always, foster homes are the backbone of GRREAT, without your welcoming homes and willingness to help we could not exist.

Thank you for an amazing 2008!

On the Road

If you transport a GRREAT dog, as a transport volunteer or foster home, you can either be reimbursed for travel costs (mileage, tolls and parking), or deduct these costs as a charitable contribution on your income taxes. The IRS-approved mileage allowance and the reimbursement rate used by GRREAT is 14 cents per mile.

You can find the GRREAT reimbursement form and instructions

on the GRREAT website www.grreat.org/admin If you incur travel expenses in order to work at a GRREAT event (e.g., an adoption day or other educational or fundraising event), those costs are also deductible as a charitable contribution on your tax return.

Please spread the word about Golden rescue by sporting a GRREAT license plate. Maryland residents can request info at http://www.grreat.org/plates.htm We are trying to collect enough names in Virginia to make them available. Please e-mail secretary@grreat.org to add your name to the list.