



Heart disease & your pet ...

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You may well ask the question ... Is my pet at risk of Heart Disease?

Our canine and feline pets are prone to heart disease just as we are. As with any medical condition, early detection is the best way to prolong the lives of pets with heart disease, and to this end, any examination of your pets will include assessment of the heart.

Certain breeds of dogs (small breeds such as Dachshund, Maltese, spaniels, and terriers) are genetically predisposed to a condition affecting the mitral valve of the heart. Cat breeds (such as Maine Coon, Persian, Siamese and Sphynx) are also predisposed to genetic heart conditions.

In recent years, new developments in therapeutic drugs for this condition have dramatically improved our ability to treat these patients, providing longer symptom-free periods and better quality of life. Cats are also prone to certain heart conditions, and similar measures can also improve the outcome for them. It all starts with an understanding of the need for frequent checks to detect early symptoms, something Westville Veterinary Hospital can do for you as a routine.

Early signs of heart disease may include a heart murmur (abnormal heart sound), reduced exercise tolerance, and, in more advanced cases, breathlessness and cough. These signs often develop in dogs older than 8 years of age. Other heart conditions may occur in much younger pets, however.

Early diagnosis is aided by newer technologies such as ultrasound (echocardiography). Certain blood tests can also be of value, depending on the case. These tests are available at this practice, so please talk to one of our vets should you have any questions.

EARLY SIGNS OF HEART DISEASE



heart murmur
(abnormal heart sound)



reduced exercise tolerance



ADVANCED SYMPTOMS



breathlessness & cough

