

Epilepsy

Overview

Idiopathic epilepsy is a specific term referring to a seizure disorder that has no identifiable cause. The terms epilepsy, seizure, fit or convulsion all mean the same thing; the physical manifestation of a sudden, excessive electrical discharge of neurons in the brain that results in a series of involuntary contractions of the voluntary muscles, abnormal sensations, abnormal behaviors, or some combination of these events.

The physical manifestations of a seizure can vary with different pets from between a far-away look or twitching in one part of the face to your pet falling on his side, barking, gnashing his teeth, urinating, defecating and paddling his limbs.

Seizures usually appear suddenly and end spontaneously, and can last from seconds to minutes. Idiopathic epilepsy can occur in all breeds. In some breeds, idiopathic epilepsy has been proven to be genetic. These breeds include German shepherd dogs, keeshonds, Belgian tervurens, beagles, Irish setters, Saint Bernards, poodles, wirehaired fox terriers, cocker spaniels, Labrador retrievers and golden retrievers. Epilepsy typically starts at around 2 to 5 years of age.

Diagnosis and Treatment Notes:

- There is no test that will definitively diagnose epilepsy. It is considered a diagnosis of exclusion; all tests are negative for other causes of seizures therefore it is probably epilepsy. To rule out other diseases, a thorough history, physical examination and bloodwork is performed. Additional tests may also be performed depending on your pet and your veterinarian.
- Treatment depends on the severity of the disease, your individual pet, and your veterinarian. Pets with epilepsy are commonly treated with Phenobarbital, diazepam or potassium bromide to control the seizures. Additional drugs to control seizures are being developed and may also be treatment options. Discuss treatment details when your pet is diagnosed with this condition.

What to Watch for*:



- Seizures
- Staggering
- Loss of bowel or bladder control
- Gnashing teeth

Please notify us if you notice any of the above signs or if you have any questions!

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