

## Megaesophagus

### Overview

Megaesophagus is a condition of decreased or absent movement of the esophagus. The esophagus is the tube that carries food and water from the throat to the stomach. With megaesophagus, passing food all the way to the stomach becomes difficult, and the food may be regurgitated back up into the throat. This reduced motility usually results in dilation of the esophagus. In some animals, pneumonia secondary to regurgitation may occur when food is aspirated into the lungs.

Megaesophagus is seen in both dogs and cats; however, it is much more common in dogs. It is hereditary in the wirehaired fox terrier and miniature schnauzer. Other breeds commonly affected include the German shepherd dog, Newfoundland, Great Dane, Irish setter, Chinese shar-pei, pug, and greyhound.

### Diagnosis and Treatment Notes:

- Megaesophagus is generally diagnosed by physical examination, bloodwork and chest x-rays. Specialized tests such as acetylcholine receptor antibody titer may be recommended.
- Treatment depends on the underlying disease, severity, your individual pet, and your veterinarian. In addition to treatment for any underlying cause, drugs to help gastrointestinal motility can help. Pets with secondary pneumonia are treated with antibiotics and fluid therapy. Discuss treatment details when your pet is diagnosed with this condition.

### What to Watch for\*:

- Regurgitation of food and water
- Fever
- Cough
- Nasal discharge
- Salivation
- Difficulty swallowing
- Weight loss
- Poor body condition

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