Are certain breeds more prone to heart disease?

Dogs

There are many different dog breeds that are more prone to heart disease. These include:

- Basset hound
- Beagle
- Bernese mountain dog
- Bloodhound
- Boxer
- Bullmastiff
- Cavalier King Charles spaniel
- Chihuahua
- Collie
- Dachshund
- Doberman pinscher
- German shepherd
- Golden retriever
- Great Dane
- Labrador retriever
- Poodle
- Rottweiler
- Saint Bernard
- Some spaniels
- Some terriers
- Weimaraner

For more information about dogs and heart disease, go to yourdogsheart.com.

Cats

Heart disease affects all types of cats, including domestic shorthair and longhair varieties. However, pure breeds such as the American shorthair, Maine coon, Persian, Siamese, sphynx and ragdoll are especially prone to this disease.

Additionally, feline heart disease can strike at any age—often “silently”—so it’s important your cat gets regular checkups by your veterinarian.

Talk to your veterinarian and read more to learn how you can take steps to safeguard the health of your pet.
Is heart disease common in cats and dogs?

It is. Consider the facts:

For dogs
- Up to 15% of younger dogs have heart disease.\(^1,2\)
- The risk of heart disease increases dramatically with age; 60% of aged dogs may have heart disease.\(^1,2\)

For cats
- Heart disease is often a “silent” disease in cats and, therefore, may go undiagnosed until it’s too late.
- Because it often goes undiagnosed, the rate of heart disease in cats is unknown. However, heart disease may be present in up to 15% of cats.\(^3\)

Adding greater urgency to the statistics is that, until recently, heart disease has been very difficult to diagnose for dogs and cats.

How does heart disease affect pets?

Cats and dogs are most commonly diagnosed with one of three cardiac conditions:

**Mitral valve disease**
The most common type of heart disease in dogs, an important valve becomes leaky and allows blood to flow through the heart in the wrong direction.

**Dilated cardiomyopathy**
Also common in dogs, the heart’s muscle becomes stretched and weak, reducing the heart’s effectiveness to pump blood.

**Hypertrophic cardiomyopathy**
More common in cats, this disease is characterized by thickening of the heart’s muscle, making it an ineffective pump.

How is a heart problem diagnosed?

A thorough physical examination and listening to your pet’s heart with a stethoscope will provide your veterinarian with clues as to whether your pet has any heart-related problems. Additionally, it’s important to take your pet to the veterinarian regularly, as early diagnosis and treatment will help your pet lead a happier, healthier and longer life.

A breakthrough in veterinary testing

By measuring the presence of the same cardiac marker that indicates heart disease in humans, the Cardiopet™ proBNP Test gives veterinarians a revolutionary new way to diagnose heart disease in cats and dogs. And this simple, affordable blood test provides results in just 24 hours.

Additional tests

Based on your pet’s examination and test results, your veterinarian may also recommend other more involved tests. These might include x-rays, an electrocardiograph (ECG) and an echocardiogram (an ultrasound evaluation of your pet’s heart).

Talk to your veterinarian

Whichever type of heart disease affects a pet, if undiagnosed or left untreated, the disease may eventually result in heart failure. Ask your veterinarian if your pet is at risk for heart disease, and tell them if you believe your pet has any of the symptoms described in this brochure. With early diagnosis, your cat or dog can live a healthier life.

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\(^1\) Edmonton MH. School of veterinary medicine offers cardiology services. *LSU Today.* 2002;18(40).