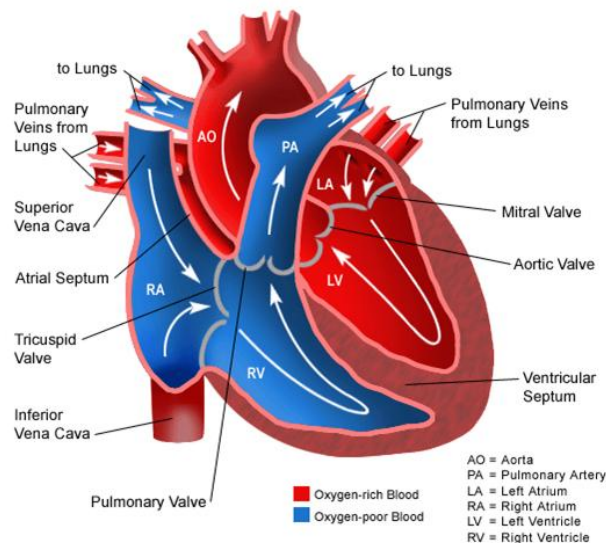


CONGESTIVE HEART FAILURE



Your pet has been diagnosed with congestive heart failure (CHF), a condition that results from severe heart disease. Common signs of heart failure include increased respiratory rate and/or effort, coughing, lethargy, and decreased appetite caused by fluid build up in the lungs (pulmonary edema). Our goal of treatment is to alleviate these signs and maintain a quality of life for your pet. We are starting your pet on the medications discussed below to treat and control the heart failure.

MONITORING:

Sleeping Respiratory Rate

You can monitor your pet's sleeping respiratory rate as an indicator of congestive heart failure. Count the number of times your pet's chest goes up and down over 15 seconds. Multiply this number by 4 to obtain breaths per minute. A sleeping respiratory rate less than 30 breaths per minute is not consistent with congestive heart failure. A sleeping respiratory rate of greater than 40 breaths per minute may indicate worsening congestive heart failure and we should be contacted immediately. A sleeping respiratory rate greater than 50 breaths per minute may indicate an emergency, and your pet should be evaluated by a veterinarian immediately. Other signs of congestive heart failure include coughing, collapse, lethargy, and decreased appetite. If you notice any of these signs, please contact us immediately.

Chest X-rays

Chest x-rays are often taken to evaluate for the presence of pulmonary edema. If your pet develops signs of heart failure, this test will likely be recommended.

Bloodwork

Some cardiac medications can adversely affect the kidneys. For this reason, it is important to monitor kidney function with blood tests as new medications are introduced or dosage changes are made.

Medications may include:

Some of the medications used to treat heart failure (diuretics) cause increased thirst and urination. Please make sure that your pet has access to water at all times and please be aware that your pet may need to go outside more frequently to urinate.

- (1) Furosemide (Lasix). Furosemide is a diuretic used to treat heart failure, by removing fluid from the lungs. If your pet starts vomiting, develops diarrhea, or stops eating while receiving this medication, please contact us immediately.
- (2) Enalapril or Benazepril. These medications are called ACE inhibitors and are used to help furosemide work more effectively. If your pet starts vomiting, develops diarrhea, or stops eating while receiving this medication, please contact us immediately.
- (3) Pimobendan (Vetmedin). Pimobendan is a medication that helps the heart pump better. Side effects are rare with this medication, but some dogs develop diarrhea. If you notice any abnormal signs after starting this medication, please contact us.

Thankfully, most dogs feel good as long as their congestive heart failure is controlled. We will work closely with you and your family veterinarian to ensure that your dog gets the best care possible.

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