

About the Cardiac Education Group (CEG)

The Cardiac Education Group is a group of board-certified veterinary cardiologists from both academia and private practice that offers independent recommendations for the evaluation and treatment of canine heart disease. The group is committed to providing resources and information on the diagnosis, treatment and management of heart disease and heart failure in dogs in order to promote detection and diagnosis with greater accuracy and confidence.

The CEG Mission

The CEG offers educational recommendations and resources that will help veterinarians diagnose, treat and manage heart disease and heart failure in dogs, improving the lives of dogs with heart disease.

The CEG promotes and facilitates:

- Educational activities to increase veterinarians' skills and confidence in diagnosing, treating and managing heart disease and heart failure.
- Tools and resources to help veterinarians detect and diagnose heart disease earlier and with greater accuracy.
- Recommendations to ensure dogs with heart failure receive optimal care and treatments to promote longevity and quality of life.
- On-line resources for veterinarians.
- Collaboration among pet owners and veterinarians pertaining to canine heart health.

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Initial Treatment of Life Threatening Congestive Heart Failure (CHF)

Initial treatment of acute CHF should include injectable furosemide, oxygen and butorphanol sedation if needed. Administer pimobendan if the patient can tolerate oral medication. These patients require 24-hour care and may benefit from specialty referral. Stabilize the patient before transport is considered.

Complicating Airway Disease

The presence of some respiratory conditions may complicate classification of dogs with heart disease. This is especially problematic in distinguishing class B2 from class C dogs. Collapsing trachea, mainstem bronchial compression due to left atrial enlargement, chronic bronchitis or pulmonary hypertension may cause symptoms similar to those of congestive heart failure. These include coughing, tachypnea or symptoms related to airway obstruction. These patients may require additional diagnostic testing and/or therapeutic trials. See www.CardiacEducationGroup.org for additional details.

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Whit M. Church, DVM, Diplomate ACVIM
Michael W. Luethy, DVM, Diplomate ACVIM

aBCds of Canine Cardiology

Arizona Veterinary Specialists, Gilbert, AZ Cardiology Pet Referral, LLC, Chicago, IL

John D. Bonagura, DVM, MS, Diplomate ACVIM

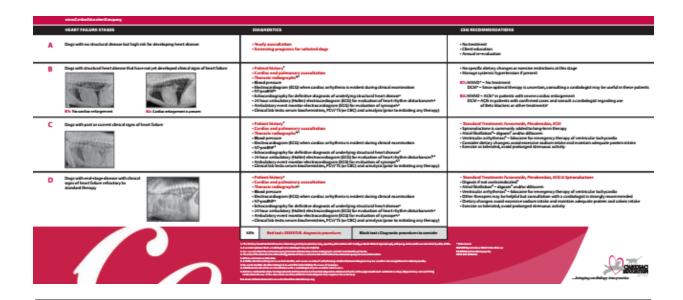
Rebecca L. Stepien, DVM, MS, Diplomate ACVIM Professor, Veterinary Clinical Sciences, Ohio State University

Clinical Professor-Cardiology, School of Veterinary Medicine, University of Wisconsin-Madison Sonya G. Gordon, DVM, DVSc, Diplomate ACVIM Associate Professor of Cardiology, Texas A&M University

Alan W. Spier, DVM, PhD, Diplomate ACVIM Florida Veterinary Specialists, Tampa, FL Cardiac Education Group www.CardiacEducationGroup.org

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A

C

Dogs with no structural disease but high risk for developing heart disease

B

Dogs with past or current clinical signs of heart failure

D

Dogs with structural heart disease that have not yet developed clinical signs of heart failure

B1: No cardiac enlargement B2: Cardiac enlargement is present

Dogs with end-stage disease with clinical signs of heart failure refractory to standard therapy

KEY: Red text : ESSENTIAL diagnostic procedures Black text : Diagnostic procedures to consider

- Yearly auscultation
- Screening programs for selected dogs
- Patient history1
- Cardiac and pulmonary auscultation
- Thoracic radiographs2, 3
- Blood pressure
- Electrocardiogram (ECG) when cardiac arrhythmia is evident during clinical examination
- NT-proBNP4
- Echocardiography for definitive diagnosis of underlying structural heart disease5
- 24 hour ambulatory (Holter) electrocardiogram (ECG) for evaluation of heart rhythm disturbances5, 6
- Ambulatory event monitor electrocardiogram (ECG) for evaluation of syncope5, 7
- Clinical lab tests: serum biochemistries, PCV/ TS (or CBC) and urinalysis (prior to initiating any therapy)
- No specific dietary changes or exercise restrictions at this stage
- Manage systemic hypertension if present

B1: MMVD* – No treatment

DCM* – Since optimal therapy is uncertain, consulting a cardiologist may be useful in these patients

B2: MMVD – ACEi* in patients with severe cardiac enlargement

DCM – ACEi in patients with confirmed cases and consult a cardiologist regarding use

of Beta blockers or other treatments8

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- No treatment

- Client education
- Annual re-evaluation
- Standard Treatment: Furosemide, Pimobendan, ACEi
- Spironolactone is commonly added to long-term therapy
- Atrial fibrillation8

 digoxin9 and/or diltiazem
- Ventricular arrhythmias8 lidocaine for emergency therapy of ventricular tachycardia
- Consider dietary changes: avoid excessive sodium intake and maintain adequate protein intake
- Exercise as tolerated, avoid prolonged strenuous activity
- Standard Treatment: Furosemide, Pimobendan, ACEi & Spironolactone
- Digoxin if not contraindicated9
- Atrial fibrillation8 digoxin9 and/or diltiazem
- Ventricular arrhythmias8 lidocaine for emergency therapy of ventricular tachycardia
- Other therapies may be helpful but consultation with a cardiologist is strongly recommended
- Dietary changes: avoid excessive sodium intake and maintain adequate protein and caloric intake
- Exercise as tolerated, avoid prolonged strenuous activity

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