

What are the signs of heart disease?

The signs of heart disease can be subtle and easily mistaken for changes associated with aging, and dogs and cats are affected differently. You and your veterinarian should watch for any of the following signs in your pet:

- Reluctance to exercise or play
- Overly tired, lethargic
- Breathlessness or difficulty breathing
- Coughing
- Collapsing or fainting

Remember, some signs of heart disease can only be detected by your veterinarian as part of a thorough examination. These include:

- Gallop rhythm (in cats)
- Irregular heartbeat (arrhythmia)
- Audible sounds between the heartbeat (murmur)

Tips for protecting your pet's heart:

- ♥ Take note of changes in your pets as they age.
- ♥ Watch for changes in appetite and exercise.
- ♥ Maintain proper body weight.
- ♥ Watch for the signs of heart disease.
- ♥ Know your breed. Some are more prone to heart disease.
- ♥ If your veterinarian hears a murmur, ask about heart disease.
- ♥ Take your pet for a checkup once a year; more often as they get older.

While there is no cure for heart disease, early detection can make a significant difference in your pet's quality of life.

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

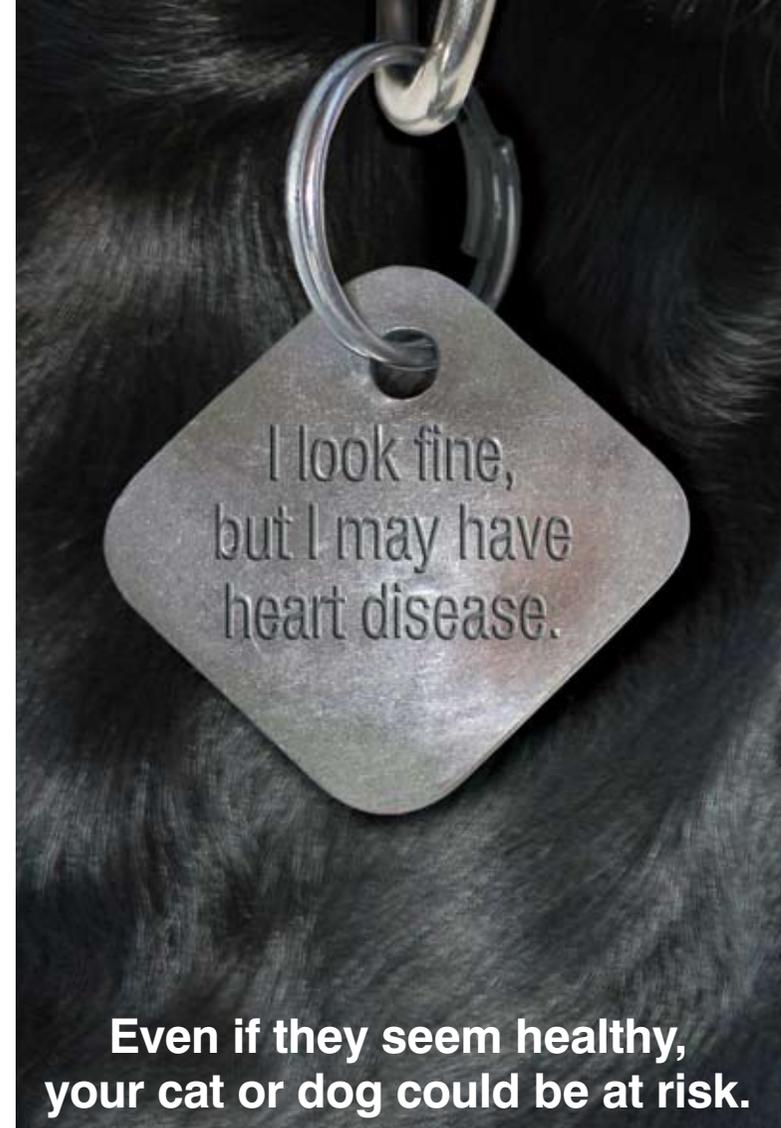
For more information about dogs and heart disease, go to yourdogsheart.com.

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.



**Even if they seem healthy,
your cat or dog could be at risk.**

Get the facts about heart disease.

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.

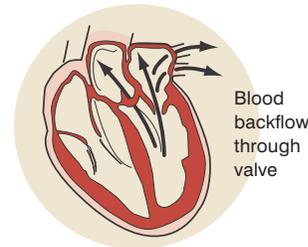


How does heart disease affect pets?

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

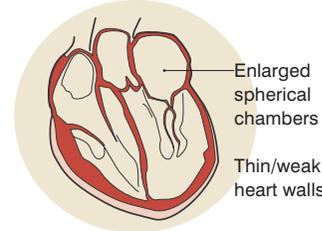
Mitral valve disease

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.



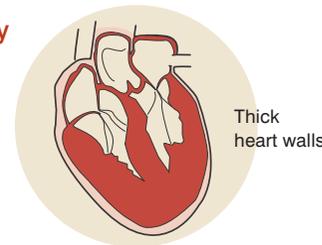
Dilated cardiomyopathy

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.



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

2. Rush JE. Chronic valvular heart disease in dogs. Proceedings from: 26th Annual Waltham Diets/OSU Symposium for the Treatment of Small Animal Cardiology; October 19–20, 2002.

3. Paige CF, Abbott JA, Pyle RL, Elvinger F. Prevalence of cardiomyopathy in apparently healthy cats [ACVIM Abstract 241]. *J Vet Intern Med*. 2006;20(3):776.