

Megaesophagus, which can occur at any age as a puppy, or as an older dog. If it afflicts a puppy, the cause is usually genetic, or can be due to a surgically repairable condition called PRAA (Persistent Right Aortic Arch). If not secondary to another disorder in adult animals, it is called "idiopathic" (cause unknown).

Megaesophagus can be secondary to other diseases such as Myasthenia Gravis, Thyroid, Addison's and other Neurological disorders.

#### Symptoms:

Regurgitation of water, mucous or food. (Regurgitation is throwing up without any warning; "vomiting" is associated with retching.)

Loss of appetite or refusal to eat.

Sudden weight loss.

Swallowing difficulty, exaggerated and/or frequent swallowing.

They will also try to clear their throat frequently with a "hacking" sound.

Sour and/or foul smelling breath.

Many canines may be mis-diagnosed with a gastro-intestinal problem.

Aspiration pneumonia is a frequent complication.

#### Management:

Your canine needs to be placed in a vertical feeding position immediately to avoid starvation and/or aspiration pneumonia. (Note: Not an "elevated bowl." Elevating the bowl does not place the esophagus in the proper orientation so that gravity will work.)