

Common Basset Health Problems

Basset Hound Health: Although he is generally healthy, the Basset is susceptible to several health conditions. We will cover a few of them here. Obesity, ear infections, bloat, and panosteitis. Other problems you may want to study on are allergies, glaucoma, von Willebrand's disease, cherry eye, and to elbow dysplasia, hip dysplasia and luxating patella. (Pano should be ruled out first).

Obesity: His long back predisposes him to disc problems and can cause problems if he is overweight, out of condition, or jumps on and off furniture. Bassets should have a daily walk and a moderate diet to avoid the problems that can come with becoming overweight. Bassets should not be allowed to climb stairs too often as this may lead to hip, elbow, or back problems.

Ear infections: A Basset's long, droopy ears can trap dirt and tend to retain moisture causing it to be prone to ear problems. **Causes:** There are many causes of ear problems including but not limited to bacteria, yeast, allergies, and parasites. A veterinarian can diagnose ear problems and provide appropriate treatment. **Symptoms:** Shakes head or scratches ears a lot, tends to cock head to one side, redness, discharge, or an unusual odor, and pain around the ear area. **Prevention:** Clean and inspect ears at least once per week.

Bloat: Bloating of the stomach is often related to swallowed air (although food and fluid can also be present). Bloat is prevalent in many deep chested breeds, including the Basset Hound. It is the second leading killer in dogs next to cancer. It is life threatening, comes on quickly, and requires immediate veterinary treatment, to save the hound. **Causes:** Stress can be a contributing factor, activity after eating, and gulping food down too quickly. **Symptoms:** Attempts to vomit (usually unsuccessful); may occur every 5-20 minutes (One of the most common symptoms), Doesn't act like usual self (Perhaps the earliest warning sign and may be the only sign that almost always occurs), Significant anxiety and restlessness (One of the earliest warning signs and seems fairly typical), "Hunched up" or "roached up" appearance (This seems to occur fairly frequently). If you suspect you basset has bloat call ahead to your vet and let them know you are bringing in a bloat case so they can be fully ready when you arrive. Bloat can quickly kill a dog! **Prevention:** Like other deep-chested breeds, Bassets should be fed twice a day throughout their lives to minimize chances of bloat and torsion. You can purchase a bowl that makes your basset eat slowly.

Pano: Panosteitis Sometimes referred to as "growing pains" or "pano", occurs as a rotating lameness, usually in between the ages of 5 months to age 2. **Causes:** There is no known cause or cure. **Symptoms:** A dog suffering from pano usually has pain and lameness he may develop a fever and nausea, become lethargic and lose his appetite. Pano causes the marrow cavities of the long bones to become inflamed. It can affect different bones at different times, and you might therefore notice how the problem may shift from limb to limb in your dog. Such a cycle of lameness can last from 2-3 weeks for each limb, and the dog will often experience periods when it has no apparent symptoms at all. **Prevention:** It is not treatable but goes away on its own usually around age 2. Pain medicine, cortisone and glucosamine may help ease symptoms until it disappears. Males tend to get it more often than females as they grow faster. Many veterinarians are not aware that this is common in basset hounds and will most often misdiagnose it, often with costly and unneeded surgery options. It is helpful when deciding on a vet to get one familiar with bassets.

Pano is common in basset hounds and a little study will prove this.

The following is from the Basset Hound Faq by Judy Trenck:

Panosteitis is an elusive ailment occasionally seen in young Bassets. It is also known as wandering or transient lameness. Attacks are usually brought on by stress and aggravated by activity, and up to now, the cause and the cure are unknown. This mysterious disease causes sudden lameness, but its greatest potential danger may lie in false diagnosis, resulting in unnecessary surgery. A puppy will typically outgrow it by the age of two with no long term problems. Symptoms can be quite minor, or so bad that the dog will not put any weight on the leg. Symptoms may be confused with "elbow displasia", "hip displasia", "patellar luxation" and other more serious disorders. The most definite way to diagnose panosteitis is radiographically. Even with this, signs can be quite minimal and easily missed. As to treatment, no cure was found in experimental tests and the only helpful thing found was relief for pain (aspirin, cortisone, etc.) However, using these, the dog tends to exercise more and thereby aggravate the condition. **A great many vets are unaware of this disease in the Basset!** In diagnosing the cause of a Basset's lameness, a radiograph of the forelimbs may indicate a condition called elbow incongruity. (Elbow incongruity is a poor fit between the 3 bones which comprise the elbow joint.) Studies to date indicate that elbow incongruity is normal in the Basset and is not the cause of the lameness. It is also suspected that many of the previously mentioned unnecessary (panosteitis) surgeries have been performed on Basset puppies just because radiographs that were taken showed elbow incongruity. A study on forelimb lameness in the Basset is currently underway at the School of Veterinary Medicine, University of Pennsylvania. As previously mentioned they have determined that elbow incongruity occurs in the Basset but suspect that incongruity rarely causes the lameness. During the course of the study, conservative therapy will be recommended for all cases in which pano appears to be the cause of the lameness. In cases with severe growth deformities or elbow pain associated with elbow incongruity, surgery may be recommended. If your Basset develops lameness and is diagnosed with an "elbow problem" or other bone problem, discuss with your veterinarian the possibility of pano and seek a second opinion from a vet that is aware of it in bassets.