

"Bloat Problems?"

Question: *My 12-year old beloved golden retriever mix has been having bloat problems for about a year. His veterinarian has put him on a new diet of chicken and rice, but he hasn't had a bowel movement in several days — is something wrong?*

Answer: *Chronic bloating can be a very critical problem. During one of the bloating incidents, your dog's stomach can actually twist or rotate. This can become an emergency situation very quickly. If it is "simple" bloat or gastric dilation without the twist, it is problematic, but not always as critical. It may be solved by the new diet that your dog is on.*

It can seem very unusual when dogs do not defecate for some time. However, if your dog's new diet is more digestible, there is less waste and less residue. Therefore, there will be fewer bowel movements.

As for when to worry, as long as there is no straining and as long as your dog continues to eat, there is unlikely to be a problem. However, if your dog is vomiting, has a loss of appetite or straining to defecate then these are signs you would need to be concerned about.

I hope that this is helpful. If there is any question or concern, however, I would encourage you to see your veterinarian. He or she may be able to assess if there is a problem or if there is any question, a radiograph (x-ray) could be taken.

This question was answered by Dr. Robert J. Krapfl, director of Gentle Doctor Animal Hospital in Omaha, Nebraska.