

"Pre-Tetanic Eclampsia"

No one wants to believe that their bitch might be something other than loving toward their new puppies. Occasionally, a bitch with an otherwise good and predictable temperament begins to act in a totally different manner during and after whelping. We hope that passing our experience on to other breeders so they can be well prepared when/if this happens to them that the bitch can be helped and also save puppies.

Many breeders are familiar with eclampsia, which is a calcium deficiency occurring in nursing bitches and is considered very serious. The pre-tetanic form occurs prior to/during/just after whelping and does occur in a variety of breeds including Corgis.

Symptoms that might occur in varying degrees include:

- Lazy whelping and/or inertia;
- Bitch being agitated and nervous;
- Cannibalism;
- Growling and aggression toward her puppies; and
- Hallucinating.

Certainly, there will be other conditions that cause aggression or similar symptoms. **But as**

a breeder, you are the person who will most likely observe whether your whelping bitch displays any of the described symptoms.

Cause

Eclampsia is brought on by extremely low calcium levels in the blood stream. The following are potential causes of the condition:

- Poor diet or improper supplementation. Calcium to phosphorus ratios are out of balance. This can sometimes be caused by the introduction of too much unbalanced meat to the diet; and
- Low blood levels of Albumen.

What Can You Do?

If your bitch has displayed any of the described symptoms in the past or if you know that there is a history of whelping problems in a particular line, by all means, talk with your veterinarian. This is particularly true since **pre-tetanic eclampsia appears to be a little-known condition and almost unknown to the average veterinarian.**

1. Laboratory tests are available to determine your bitches blood chemistry and calcium levels.

2. Diet

- Use high quality meat-based food but don't over supplement with all sorts of calcium or unbalanced meat products.
- Add a balanced source of calcium, phosphorus, and Vitamin D to the bitch's diet beginning about mid-term. DO NOT add calcium alone! It must be used with phosphorus and Vitamin D. (Remember that optimum ratio of calcium to phosphorus of 1.2 to 1)!

Treatment Option

The treatment is "Calphosol" (calcium) given sub-Q during the last stage of labor. Then every 6-8 hours for 2-3 days. Should the symptoms begin to reappear after the initial treatment, Calphosol can be re-administered to the bitch as often as prescribed and up to 3 weeks after whelping. In those recent cases that we have heard about where this treatment was given, the bitches settled down and cared for their pups within a day!

As a breeder, consulting your veterinarian prior to whelping to discuss your bitches health and medical history is of utmost importance. This is in addition to the normal x-ray or ultrasound pre-delivery consultations.

Pre-tetanic eclampsia is just one more condition that might present itself during the birthing process. All breeders should be aware of it and be prepared to prevent it and treat it should it occur.

In no way is the above information intended to take the place of your veterinarian's advice and recommendations regarding the care of your dog.

Consult your veterinarian prior to starting treatments of any kind.

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