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Popular Article

## Disorders of Upper Digestive System in Dogs

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Upper digestive diseases in dogs can affect various parts of their upper gastrointestinal tract, including the mouth, throat, esophagus, and stomach. If you suspect that your dog may have an upper digestive disease, thorough examination, various diagnostic tests (such as X-rays or endoscopy) are necessary steps to develop a treatment plan tailoring to your dog's specific condition. Early detection and treatment are crucial for managing these conditions to ensure your dog's well-being.

These are some common upper digestive disorders in dogs:

1. **Gingivitis and Periodontal Disease:** These are conditions that affect the gums and teeth. Gingivitis is inflammation of the gums, and if left untreated, it can progress to periodontal disease, which involves the loss of tooth-supporting structures.
2. **Dental Abscesses:** These are painful infections that can develop in the mouth due to dental problems. They often result from untreated dental disease.
3. **Oesophagitis:** Esophagitis is inflammation of the oesophagus, which can be caused by various factors, including acid reflux, foreign bodies, infections, and medications.
4. **Megaesophagus:** This is a condition in which the oesophagus becomes enlarged and loses its ability to move food into the stomach properly. It can lead to regurgitation of food and difficulty swallowing.
5. **Oral Tumours:** Dogs can develop tumours in the mouth, which may be benign or malignant. These tumours can affect the dog's ability to eat and may require surgical removal.
6. **Cleft Palate:** Some dogs are born with a cleft palate, which is an opening in the roof of the mouth. This condition can make it challenging for them to eat and may require surgical correction.



7. **Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease (GERD):** Similar to humans, dogs can also experience GERD, where stomach acid flows back into the oesophagus, causing irritation and discomfort.
8. **Pharyngitis:** Inflammation of the pharynx (the throat area) can occur due to infections or irritants and may cause swallowing difficulties.
9. **Gastric Dilatation-Volvulus (GDV):** Also known as bloat, GDV is a severe condition where the stomach fills with gas and twists upon itself. It's a medical emergency that can lead to death if not treated promptly.
10. **Vomiting and Regurgitation:** These are common symptoms of various upper digestive disorders, including gastritis, esophagitis, or foreign body ingestion.
11. **Gastritis:** Gastritis is inflammation of the stomach lining and can result from infections, dietary indiscretions, or the ingestion of toxic substances.
12. **Foreign Body Ingestion:** Dogs sometimes swallow objects that can become lodged in their upper digestive tract, causing blockages and other issues, Souto et al., 2023.
13. **Salivary Gland Disease:** Conditions affecting the salivary glands can cause swelling, discomfort, and difficulty in eating.
14. **Cricopharyngeal achalasia** -failure, or asynchrony, of the cricopharyngeous muscle to relax during swallowing, thereby preventing the normal passage of a food bolus from the caudal pharynx to the cranial Oesophagus. It has been mainly identified in toy breeds.
15. **Periodontal Disease-** This bacterial infection of the tissue surrounding the teeth causes inflammation of the gingivae, periodontal ligament, cementum, and alveolar bone. Ultimately, teeth are lost due to the loss of their supporting tissues. This is the major reason for tooth loss in dogs.
16. **Gingival Hyperplasia (Fibromatosis gingivae, Fibromatous epulis, Epulis)** This benign overgrowth of the epithelial and connective tissue of the gums usually originates near the gingival margin. The tissue is relatively insensitive and tough and has the density of fibrous connective tissue. The growths usually have a broad base of attachment, are the colour of the normal gum or paler, and may grow large enough to completely cover the surfaces of several teeth. Predisposition may exist among brachycephalic breeds, in which the condition is termed familial gingival hypertrophy.
17. **Epulis** sometimes refers to giant-cell epulis or tumour of the gum of dogs. This tumour usually is localized to a single tooth. Biopsy is encouraged to assure proper diagnosis, treatment, and prognosis, Freiche et al.2021.
18. **Gingival hyperplasia** is most common in older dogs and is usually asymptomatic. Hair, food,



and debris may collect between the growth and the teeth and cause irritation and halitosis. Gingivectomy by electrosurgical techniques is the most satisfactory treatment, Tan *et al.*, (1987).

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