

Dog Cardiology: Understanding Your Dog's Heart Health



Your Dog's Heart: A Vital Engine

Just like in humans, a dog's heart pumps blood throughout the body, delivering oxygen and nutrients to keep organs and tissues healthy. When something goes wrong, early detection and care are key to keeping your pet feeling their best.



Common Heart Conditions in Dogs

- **Heart Murmurs:** An abnormal sound indicating turbulent blood flow. Some are harmless, while others signal heart disease.
- **Congestive Heart Failure (CHF):** The heart can't pump effectively, causing fluid buildup in the lungs or abdomen.
- **Valve Disease (especially Mitral Valve Disease):** Common in small breeds and older dogs; the heart valves don't close properly.
- **Dilated Cardiomyopathy (DCM):** The heart muscle weakens and enlarges, more common in large breeds like Dobermans or Boxers.
- **Arrhythmias:** Irregular heartbeats that can affect circulation and energy levels.



Signs of Heart Disease

Keep an eye out for these early warning signs:

- Coughing, especially at night or after exercise
- Labored or rapid breathing
- Fatigue or reluctance to exercise
- Fainting or collapse
- Weight loss or a swollen belly (from fluid buildup)
- Weakness or restlessness

If you notice any of these, schedule a veterinary visit promptly—early intervention can make a big difference.



How We Diagnose Heart Problems

At Pleasant Valley Pet Clinic, we use advanced diagnostic tools to assess heart health:

- *Physical Exam & Stethoscope Evaluation*
- **Chest X-rays** to visualize the heart and lungs
- **Echocardiogram (ultrasound)** to see heart structure and motion
- **Electrocardiogram (ECG)** to check heart rhythm

- **Blood Pressure and Lab Work** to assess overall health and heart strain



Treatment and Management

Treatment depends on the diagnosis but may include:

- **Medications** to improve heart function, reduce fluid buildup, or control rhythm
- **Dietary Management** — low-sodium diets or supplements that support cardiac function
- **Exercise Guidance** — moderate activity as advised by your vet
- **Routine Monitoring** — regular checkups and follow-up imaging

With the right care, many dogs with heart conditions live long, happy lives.



Prevention & Ongoing Care

- Keep your dog at a healthy weight
- Provide regular exercise suited to their condition
- Schedule annual or biannual checkups—especially for senior pets
- Use heartworm prevention year-round
- Report any coughing, fatigue, or changes in breathing early

Your Partner in Cardiac Care

Our veterinary team is here to guide you through every stage of your dog's heart health—from prevention to diagnosis and treatment.

*📞 If you have concerns about your dog's heart, call **Pleasant Valley Pet Clinic** to schedule an exam.*