



ABOUT THE DISEASE

Reverse sneezing is a spastic inhalation with a honking sound that is caused by spasms of the soft palate. It is often difficult to describe, but the key is that **reverse sneezing** is a spastic inhale sound which looks much worse than its actual effects.

The most common cause of **reverse sneezing** is an irritation of the soft palate and throat that results in a spasm. Often, allergies are implicated as the most common cause, but anything that irritates the throat can cause this spasm. Other causes include excitement, eating and drinking, exercise intolerance, pulling on a leash, mites, pollen, foreign bodies caught in the throat, perfumes, viruses, household chemicals, allergies, and post-nasal drip.

OBTAINING A DIAGNOSIS

Recognizing that a patient is **reverse sneezing** and not in severe respiratory distress is often difficult but can be differentiated by a veterinarian during an examination. Recording a video during the event can also help the veterinarian achieve a diagnosis, as most patients will be normal during evaluation.

Diagnosing the underlying disease that causes the **reverse sneezing** is much more difficult as there are many triggers. However, environmental allergy testing may provide some benefit if the patient is exhibiting seasonal symptoms.

Sedated oral examination can occasionally provide visualization of the mouth and throat to make sure no masses or growths are present. Also, this examination will allow visualization of an elongated soft palate, which may cause a trigger.

Scoping the nasal passages (rhinoscopy) may also be required to visualize sinus tissues and obtain a biopsy to find an underlying cause.

TREATMENT

Reverse sneezing rarely requires treatment for the spasms and event.

Medical or surgical management is dictated by the underlying cause, but may be difficult to determine. Most cases are provided exogenous glucocorticoids (steroids) as a general suppressant of the immune system in allergy suspect cases. Also, long-acting antihistamines may also be beneficial.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Don't panic; these episodes look worse than their actual effect.
- Patients are not choking, they can breathe, and are not going to die from **reverse sneezing**.
- Attempt treatment with steroids or antihistamines to gauge improvement of frequency or severity.