



HYPERTROPHIC OSTEODYSTROPHY

ABOUT THE DISEASE

Hypertrophic osteodystrophy (HOD) is a disease of severe pain and lameness seen in rapidly growing large and giant breed dogs (Great Danes, Boxers, Labradors, German Shepherds, and Weimaraners) between the ages of 2-6 months.

Clinical signs of **HOD** include fever, anorexia (decreased appetite), depression, lameness, and pain of long bones. The lower portion of the forelimbs (radius & ulna) and occasionally the hind limbs (tibia) are most commonly affected. Rarely the ribs, jawbone, and bones of the feet are affected.

The cause of **HOD** is largely unknown but proposed causes include distemper virus infection, bacterial infection, and other viral infections. Vitamin C deficiency is an unlikely cause of this disease, as it was previously believed.

OBTAINING A DIAGNOSIS

The diagnosis of HOD is based on physical examination, a thorough clinical history, and the presence of supporting radiographic (x-ray) changes (a black line through the growth plates).

TREATMENT

Only supportive treatments are available for **HOD**.

When a patient goes through an acute (sudden) phase of the disease, intravenous (IV) fluids are usually required to keep the patient hydrated along with injectable opiate pain medications.

In extreme cases, nutritional support may need to be provided through a feeding tube if the patient refuses to eat for five or more days.

Long-term pain relief is often achieved by nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medications and other oral pain medications.

Antibiotics are prescribed if the patient has signs of pneumonia or other bacterial infections.

If the bones become twisted due to growth plate damage, corrective surgery may be recommended.

Distemper vaccination is often delayed until the patient has been in remission for a couple of months.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- **HOD** is a self-limiting disease that can last for a few weeks per episode.
- Recurrence of the condition is expected in most affected dogs until the pet is 8 to 10 months of age.