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***Understanding silent heat – not noticeable.***

So you have been waiting anxiously for your dog to go into heat.

This could be for various reasons.

As breeder or for wanting to breed the female.

It could be you were planning to breed her this time, or you simply wanted to get her spayed right after the heat.

It could also be that you just wanted to be prepared so you could take all the necessary precautions that should always be taken by owners who choose to keep their female dogs intact.

As breeder you should be familiar with your dog's heat cycle.

You know how often in general it happens and you know how to recognize the signs of proestrus.

Then six months go by and nothing happens.

As the seventh months flies by you start scratching your head.

What happened?

Did you miss it?

Is your dog's heat cycle going bonkers?

Did she skip her heat or is it late?

Then it could have been a silent heat you just did not notice.

### **Looking at the possibility of a silent heat?**

Often veterinarians who specialize in reproductive health are questioned by owners just as puzzled as you.

More often than not, the dog most likely went in heat and the owner just didn't notice it.

Okay, you may say, as the owner may have not noticed, but what about all the male dogs?

Shouldn't they have been showing at least some interest?

What about the trails of males in adoration waiting behind the front door?

Following are some causes of what commonly are referred to as "silent heats".

### **Lack of signs.**

This occurs when your female will have a heat cycle without the normal symptoms such as bleeding and swelling of the vulva. Females will still be receptive to males and can become pregnant. Your veterinarian can check for a silent heat cycle by performing vaginal cytology and progesterone assays.

Your dog may have simply given off little signs of going into heat you may have not caught. It happens - As mentioned, countless vets are contacted for the same very problem.

If you were not planning to breed, count your blessings; many owners would have wished a silent heat so they did not have to deal with all the annoying cleaning and cranky behaviors associated with it.

### **But how could you have missed it?**

Some dogs are fastidiously clean and will readily lick off any signs of evidence, the bloody discharge may have never made it to the floor. Other dogs simply don't bleed much at times, these "dry heats" are not abnormal.

If you are planning to breed your dog, don't rely on the presence of blood alone!

Aggressive behaviour.

OK, so you may have missed your dog's heat cycle, but what about the other male dogs?

Aren't other dogs supposed to smell a female in heat from a distance and go bonkers over it?

### **How could your neighbor's male dog care less?**

At times, some female dogs who are aggressive towards males and a bit on the assertive side, may discourage them from showing any interest.

### **Medical conditions.**

At times, what looks like a silent heat is actually a missing heat.

If about 10 months have passed and your dog didn't go into heat, it could be you have missed the signs, but it could also very well be that your dog really didn't go into heat.

Keep in mind that this can happen and at times this can be due to some medical problems.

Possible conditions capable of causing a lack of heat include hypothyroidism, hyperadrenocorticism, hypoadrenocorticism, diabetes mellitus and cancer.

### **Some dogs and some dog breed.**

Some dogs just cycle out of the normal 6-7 month average.

Although not very common, some dogs may go into heat as late as 12-14 months old.

So if your dog didn't go into heat, and doesn't seem to be planning going into heat soon, then your next step is to have your dog seen by a vet. Have the vet rule out any medical problems.

You might consider having a progesterone level done, as well as consulting with a riogenologist.

Your vet may then decide to check on your dog's progesterone levels to have some idea of what may be going on.

If your dog did undergo a silent heat, her progesterone levels would still be high enough to prove that.

Weekly cytology tests may provide an insight on the chances for an estrus cycle nearing or signs that there's not going to be any future cycle in the near future.

Interestingly, if your dog is late in her heat and you're concerned, housing her next to or close by another intact female who is approaching proestrus may help.

There are many cases, where a cycling dog may induce heat in another female dog living alongside.

Many breeders witness this.

**Disclaimer:** this article is not to be used as a substitute for professional veterinary advice.

If your dog is undergoing a silent or missing heat, please see your vet.

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