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Borborygmi - stomach noise.

Please don't ignore it By Dr. Becker

If you've ever actually heard your [dog's digestive tract](#) at work, you may have wondered what was up with all that gurgling.

As is the case with humans, some dogs have noisier stomachs and intestines than others, and while a digestive symphony may seem normal for your dog, it can also sometimes signal a problem.

What causes the noise is gas moving through the digestive tract.

Some amount of gas in your dog's intestines is normal.

It's also normal for the intestines to experience rhythmic muscle contractions called peristalsis, which move things through the digestive tract.

Normal stomach gurgling is typically a soft sound interspersed with periods of silence, which is a sign that an ordinary amount of gas is moving through the digestive tract in an ordinary fashion.

Abnormally loud digestive sounds typically occur when the bowels contain large amounts of gas, peristalsis is increased, or both.

There can be many causes for loud stomach gurgling — some are harmless, others are more serious.

A few in each category follow.

Generally benign causes of stomach noise.

Normal digestion and hunger.

If your otherwise healthy dog just ate a meal and their stomach gurgles a bit, it means their gastrointestinal tract has gone to work digesting the food.

When your dog is hungry, the stomach and intestines have little to work on in the way of food, so what's left is gas.

If their digestive tract grows active as mealtime nears, you might hear some gurgling.

The solution, obviously, is to feed the dog — either their usual meal or a small snack to tide them over till mealtime.

Swallowing air.

Believe it or not, plain old oxygen can create stomach noise as well as burping in dogs who tend to ingest a lot of air.

It can happen if your dog scarfs their meals or breathes heavily during exercise.

Air swallowing is generally harmless, but eating too fast can cause problems in some dogs.

Intestinal parasites.

Intestinal parasites take up residence inside your dog's gastrointestinal tract and cause a host of digestive and other issues.

Common [parasites](#) invaders include such as [giardia](#), coccidia and cryptosporidium, and worms (whipworms, tapeworms and hookworms).

Foreign bodies in the GI tract.

This is typically the result of dietary indiscretion, and involves items a dog ingests that don't pass easily through the digestive system, such as string, cloth, a toy, a leash, a sock, sticks, rocks, bones and other non-food objects.

Some foreign bodies, for example, certain coins, can cause [zinc toxicity](#). Others can cause local damage to a region of your dog's digestive tract.

Inflammatory bowel disease (IBD).

[Inflammatory bowel disease](#) is a condition in which the intestines are inflamed, meaning there are high numbers of inflammatory cells present in the lining of the digestive tract.

This inflammation causes structural changes in the mucosal lining, which results in dysfunctional digestion and interferes with the body's ability to break down and absorb nutrients from food.

Dysbiosis (leaky gut syndrome).

An imbalance of gut bacteria, which means inadequate supplies of good bacteria, plus an overgrowth of bad bacteria, and sometimes yeast, can lead to inflammation of the membranes of the intestine, which results in the condition known as [dysbiosis](#) or leaky gut.

Causes of leaky gut in dogs include antibiotics, corticosteroids, NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs), processed pet food, stress, toxin ingestion, vaccines and parasite infections.

When to make an appointment with your veterinarian.

If your dog has occasional temporary stomach gurgling, there's probably no need for concern.

For example, if it's first thing in the morning and he seems normal except for the gurgling, it is time feed the dog.

If the dog eats with no problem and the noises stop, the dog is probably fine.

However, if your dog's digestive activity is easy to hear on a regular basis, as in, several times a week, or if there are other symptoms along with the tummy noises, such as a change in appetite, vomiting, diarrhea, excessive drooling, lethargy or signs of abdominal pain, you

should make an appointment with your veterinarian as soon as possible.

Also if your dog is producing loud intestinal noises and seems sick, seek veterinary care immediately.

Evaluating your dog's diet.

A difficult-to-digest diet is one of the most common reasons for stomach and intestinal noises in animals.

The food that is easiest for most healthy dogs to digest is a nutritionally balanced raw or gently cooked whole food diet.

Many digestive upsets, including tummy rumbling and gassiness, completely resolve once a dog is transitioned from a high-starch processed pet food to a balanced, species-appropriate, [non-GMO](#) and whole food diet containing no grains, potatoes or other starches and no chemical preservatives or additives.

All dry foods must contain starch to form the kibble, and starches can ferment to produce lots of GI gas, and in turn, lots of GI rumbling throughout the day.

Working with a holistic or integrative veterinarian to create a biologically appropriate diet and supplement protocol specifically suited to your individual dog's needs.