

# ANIMAL HOSPITAL OF LANESVILLE

1849 Highway 11 Lanesville, IN 47136 (812) 952-3643

## Seizures

By Dr. Rene Wingerter

If you have ever seen your pet have a seizure, you know how frightening it is. You aren't really sure what is happening and you are afraid he might die. All you know is that you never want to see it happen again.

Dogs and cats can have seizures for many reasons: heart, kidney and liver disease, low blood sugar, brain tumors, certain poisons and infections. The most common reason for a healthy pet to have a seizure is a disease called epilepsy. Epilepsy occurs in about 3% of dogs and less than 1% of cats.

Some pets may not have a typical grand mal seizure. They may just act stiff, stare, moan or have facial twitches. These are called petit mal seizures and are often not even recognized as a seizure. What ends up bringing the pet and owner to the veterinarian are the typical seizures where the pet falls on its side, all the muscles contract and the body twitches uncontrollably. In either case, the best thing you can do is remain calm, turn down the lights, keep the noise down and stay close to your pet. Do not put your hand or face near your pet's mouth or you could be bitten accidentally. If your pet does not stop seizing in 10 minutes, call your veterinarian.

Any pet that has a seizure should be seen by a veterinarian as soon as convenient for an exam and blood tests. These tests should show if your pet has any liver or kidney problems that could not only cause seizures but could also cause problems if you decided to start medications.

Although there are several types of medications for epilepsy, I have the best luck with either Phenobarbital or potassium bromide. If the seizures are mild and the dog is just starting to have them, then potassium bromide works well. There are none of the side effects with this drug such as drowsiness that you see with the Phenobarbital. It is also less toxic to the liver. It takes a few weeks for it to build up in the system where it will control the seizures.

However, in some dogs, Phenobarbital works better at controlling seizures than potassium bromide. Although it can cause liver disease this is usually only after the pet has been on the medication for many years. At first it may your pet to act sleepy but

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in a few weeks your pet becomes resistant to this side effect and will behave normally.

Most pets live a long and healthy life with epilepsy but only if they get prompt treatment. If you have any questions please call us at the Animal Hospital of Lanesville at 952-3643. 🐾