

Excerpt from The Basset Hound Owners Guide (Course 101 Basset Hound University)

GLOSSARY OF HEALTH PROBLEMS AFFECTING DOGS

This glossary is not a complete listing of all possible health problems and is not intended to be a substitute for veterinary care. If there is any doubt in your mind that your dog needs treatment, take him to his veterinarian.

Abdominal Pain	Sudden onset of abdominal pain, along with vomiting, restlessness, whining or labored breathing can be signs of torsion (bloat), poisoning, peritonitis or intestinal obstruction. Treatment of any of these conditions should not be delayed. Seek veterinary care immediately.
Anal Gland Problems	Infections or impactions of the anal glands will be apparent by the dog scooting across the floor, licking his or her anal area excessively, or by a swollen or red anal area. The dog may have a strong odor. In the case of impaction, “expressing” the anal sacs will usually relieve the condition. In the case of infection, antibiotics may be used in addition to expressing the glands. Your veterinarian should be consulted, and may be willing to teach you to express the glands yourself.
Cataracts	Several types of cataracts are seen in dogs: juvenile, adult and diabetic. A cloudy lens or small white areas within the lens is usually visible to the naked eye. Some early stage cataracts may not be visible to you. Adult cataracts usually progress so slowly that they do not cause a serious threat to the dog’s vision. Juvenile and diabetic cataracts can progress quite rapidly and cause total blindness.
Conjunctivitis	An infection or inflammation of the conjunctiva, the tissue that lines the eyelids and attaches to the eyeball near the cornea can be caused by allergies, viruses, bacteria or fungi. Drops and ointments are usually used. Consult your vet for appropriate treatment.

Constipation and diarrhea

In the absence of other symptoms, these conditions are often due to improper feeding. If either persist for more than one day, or if the diarrhea is extreme or bloody, consult your vet.

Ear Infections

Shaking the head, scratching and/or an odor from the ear may indicate an ear infection. The structure of the Basset Hound ear does not allow air to circulate well, and ear infections are common. Sometimes, ear mites may be the cause. Failure to treat can cause damage to the eardrum. Preventative care is suggested to reduce the chance of these infections. Keep your dog's ears clean with a good quality ear cleaner. This should be done at least once a week. Consult your vet if you see a problem.

Fleas and Ticks

The presence of fleas and/or ticks can have an adverse effect on your dog. It is important for your dog's general condition to keep these pests under control. There are several ways to prevent or rid your dog and home of an infestation. Seek the suggestion of your veterinarian regarding products to use on your dog or in your home. Remember, it doesn't do any good to just remove these pests from your dog if you don't remove them from your home, yard and automobiles.

Gingivitis

Plaque and tartar build up on your dog's teeth can cause an infection or inflammation of the gums as gums pull away from the teeth. Symptoms include foul breath, bleeding gums and excessive drooling. Diminished appetite or difficulty in eating may be seen. Veterinary care should be sought, as the problem can become quite serious and painful for your dog. Infection from the gums can travel to the heart and other internal organs. Preventive care is advised through regular brushing, a dry food diet, and hard chew objects to help prevent tartar and plaque buildup.

Heat stroke



Commonly occurs in dogs left in cars in hot weather, left outdoors without shade, left unattended in a drying cage or exercised too hard in hot weather. Rapid breathing, bright red mucus membranes, vomiting and a high rectal temperature are signs of heat stroke. Steps should be taken immediately to cool the dog through a cool water hose or bath. Veterinary treatment should be sought immediately.

<p>Hot spots</p>	<p>Areas of inflamed skin which are often caused by repetitive scratching or chewing. The area may “weep” and be very moist. The size of a hot spot can increase virtually in front of your eyes! Treating hot spots effectively involves finding the source of the fleas, mites, allergy or insect bite, and eliminating the cause. The spot should be kept clean and dry. Your veterinarian should be consulted.</p>
<p>Insect Bites</p> 	<p>Painful swelling can occur from bee, wasp, yellow jacket, hornet or ant stings. These stings can cause a dog to have an allergic reaction and go into shock. If your dog has difficulty breathing shortly after a sting, seek veterinary care immediately. This can be a life-threatening condition. Bees leave a stinger behind that should be carefully removed with tweezers. For general discomfort, ice packs can relieve swelling and pain. DO NOT use “human” allergy medication without consulting your veterinarian. Some of these medications may contain compounds that can be deadly to dogs.</p>
<p>Itchy Skin</p> 	<p>Fleas, contact allergies and food allergies can all contribute to itchy skin. Most dogs don’t develop allergies until they are three years of age or so. Treatment varies with the severity of the allergy. Secondary infections, such as ear infections, often accompany allergies. It is not always possible to “cure” an allergy, but it is possible in most cases to “manage” one. Veterinary care should be sought.</p>
<p>Kidney disorder</p>	<p>The presence of blood in the urine, inability to urinate or an increase in frequency of urination can all be signs of renal disease. These range from renal failure, infections, and occasionally the presence of bladder or kidney stones. Any change in your dog’s elimination habits should be considered a cause for immediate veterinary attention to identify and treat the cause. Your dog should urinate in a strong, steady stream with no straining.</p>
<p>Mange</p>	<p>Several different mange mites can cause a variety of hair loss as well as extreme itching. Sarcoptic and demodectic mange are two of these. Veterinary care must be sought.</p>
<p>Parasites</p>	<p>Intestinal parasites include roundworms, whip worms, hookworms and tapeworms. These parasites can cause a variety of symptoms including anemia, vomiting, diarrhea and coughing. They can represent a health hazard to your pet. A fecal examination of your dog will provide your veterinarian with a diagnosis and proper treatment.</p>

Poisoning

Prevention is key to avoiding poisoning. Keep all chemicals, medication and other hazards safety locked away from your hound!



Curious by nature, Bassets are subject to poisoning from many sources. Symptoms vary and include the following: diarrhea, vomiting, seizures, rash and mouth irritation, drooling and in some cases, death.

Many house plants, shrubs and trees are poisonous. Additionally, your dog may come into contact with strichine, arsenic, methaldehyde, lead, zinc phosphate, warfarin, antifreeze, petroleum products, products commonly found in household cleaners, and organo-phosphates such as sevin. Many of these substances are found in rat poison, garden products such as fertilizer and insecticides, flea or tick treatments, and some dewormers. Toads, garbage and human medication can also be poisonous to dogs.

Unless you know exactly what your dog has ingested and have consulted with your veterinarian or an animal poison control hotline, DO NOT induce vomiting. If you know the substance, follow veterinary or poison control instructions exactly.

The national ASPCA poison control hotline is at 888-426-4435. There is a charge, which can be paid by credit card. In addition, in many cases, local poison control hotlines can assist with basic questions. In all cases, consult your veterinarian.

Prostate disease

There are three primary conditions which can affect an intact male dog: prostate enlargement, prostate infections, and in a few cases, prostate cancer. Symptoms may include constipation, straining to pass stool, difficulty passing urine, and blood or pus in the urine. While neutering a male does not eliminate the possibility of prostate problems, it does significantly reduce their likelihood, and is a good practice for your pet. Consult your veterinarian if you see symptoms.

Pyometra

This is a disease of the uterus which follows generally within two to four months following a bitch's heat cycle. Excessive consumption of water, licking at the vulva, or diminished appetite can all be signs of pyometra. There may or may not be a discharge. This is a life threatening disease, and in many cases spaying the bitch is the best treatment. The threat of pyometra and the elimination of the possibility of having unwanted puppies are two of the best reasons to spay your Basset bitch.

Snake-bite



Nonpoisonous snake bites may be of little concern. Bite marks are horseshoe shaped. Poisonous snake bites can be fatal. You may be able to see two fang marks. If you can identify the species, do so. There are antivenoms available in many parts of the country. If your dog suffers a poisonous snake bite, restrain the dog, and apply a tourniquet above the bite. If possible suction the poison out of the wound. Keep the dog quiet and seek veterinary care immediately.

Shock

One of the most common causes of shock in dogs is being hit by a car. Other causes are heat stroke, dehydration, poisoning, and hemorrhage. Signs of shock are drop in temperature, shivering, pale mucus membranes and a weak faint pulse. Keep the dog warm and quiet and transport to your veterinarian immediately.

Stool eating (Coprophagia)

Coprophagia is an offensive habit to humans but is not unnatural in dogs. While there can be a medical cause, it may be the result of boredom, hunger or stress and can become an annoying habit.

Some feel that meat tenderizer, or a product called ForBid, will make the taste of stool objectionable to discourage the dog. There is no fool-proof way to correct the behavior. If it's a new behavior for your dog, consult your veterinarian to rule out underlying medical causes. Keep the yard well-scooped, hand walk the dog for elimination.

Torn nail

It is not uncommon for a dog to tear out a nail from near the base of the toe. The dog may limp or bleed profusely. Pack the nail bed with cotton or use styptic powder to stop the bleeding. Ask your vet to see if any portion of the nail that remains needs to be removed.

Tumors & cysts

Fairly common in dogs. Most do not pose a significant risk. It is advisable that your veterinarian examine all tumors and cysts.