

lissa.scott

From: ExtMAGDRL@yahoogroups.com on behalf of lissa.scott [lissa.scott@verizon.net]
Sent: Saturday, December 30, 2006 11:53 AM
To: ExtMAGDRL@yahoogroups.com
Subject: [ExtMAGDRL] DOE Topic #34: Health causes for aggression

Hi All,

In reading more from "Your Dog", there's another good article in the August 2006 edition called "Physical Causes of Aggression." We sometimes see posts from dog owners whose previously friendly dog suddenly became aggressive toward humans or animals without apparent provocation. We usually suggest eliminating health issues as a first approach, but different vets may take different approaches to finding the source. Sharing some common health causes for aggression as Dog Owner Education Topic #34.

Below is a list of causes to rule out if a dog suddenly becomes aggressive:

1. The most common health-based cause of sudden onset aggression is pain. For Danes these may be musculo-skeletal injuries like torn tendons or ligaments; arthritis or spondylosis; or cancer may be the cause.
2. Trauma is another common cause -- shock or injury that may not be visible. The article mentioned a dog that ran head-first into a pole but had no obvious injury, but who subsequently became aggressive.
3. Infections like rabies and Lyme disease (although Lyme vaccine is not 100% effective and may result in false-positive Lyme disease tests.)
4. Hormone imbalance -- often seen as hypothyroidism in Danes. Symptoms include lethargy, unexplained weight gain, hair loss, recurring allergies or infections, and sensitivity to cold. These would make me cranky too!
5. Partial seizures that may not be as obvious as gran mal epileptic seizures, but may be evidenced by Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde behavior.
6. Nutrition may be a cause in dogs that cannot tolerate components of their food. They mention high protein content which blocks production of serotonin production (regulates body temperature, mood, sleep, vomiting, sexuality, and appetite.)
7. Toxins like zinc, copper, or lead which the dog may be exposed to from linoleum, putty, or contaminated soil.
8. Some dog trainers have linked allergies to aggression, and studies have shown that's true for some dogs (as well as for some people!)

The author recommends looking for health-related causes in cases where there's no discernable trigger or pattern to a dog's aggression. First rule out pain or trauma; next have a thyroid panel and a Lyme test done; then look at diet, allergies, and other potential causes. The good news for dogs and their owners is that there are available treatments/solutions for many of the health causes of aggression listed above.

As always, thanks for educating yourself to benefit dogs and their owners!

Lissa Scott
AKC Canine Good Citizen Evaluator
Mid-Atlantic Great Dane Rescue League
MAGDRL web: <http://www.magdrl.org>
MAGDRL events: <http://www.lissa.net/Joya/MAGDRL.htm>
Bloat info: http://www.lissa.net/Joya/Merlot_bloat.htm
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"A dog is the only thing on earth that loves you more than he loves himself." - Josh Billings



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