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**Sent:** Saturday, July 12, 2008 2:49 PM  
**To:** 'ExtMAGDRL@yahoogroups.com'  
**Subject:** DOE Topic #49: Dane Mortality

Hi All,

As I await the results from Jupiter's cardiologist after his echocardiogram last Thursday, suffice to say that Dane health is on my mind! In the past two years, three different veterinarians -- at Virginia Tech Veterinary Teaching Hospital, at our holistic DVM, and at our traditional DVM -- have diagnosed Jupiter with irregular heartbeat (arrhythmia), an early sign of Dilated Cardiomyopathy (DCM.) As a result, he gets an annual echocardiogram so that we can catch it early and begin life-extending treatment.

I firmly believe that education is our first line of defense in protecting our canine companions, so I am sharing some very sad and scary statistics hoping that they may save a dog's life and its owner heartache. This is Dog Owner Education Topic #49: Dane Mortality.

You may wonder what the most common causes of death are for adult Great Danes. Here are the numbers:

1. Bloat/GDV is the #1 killer with a 37% to 50% likelihood of a Dane experiencing it and a 50% mortality rate. Males (66%) are more prone to bloat than females (33%). The risk of developing bloat goes up 20 percent each year after the age of 5 YO, with age 7 YO being the peak age in Great Danes. I can personally attest to that as two of ours bloated/torsed around that age. The first line of defense against bloat is owner diligence in noticing symptoms of distress, and since seconds count with GDV, getting the Dane immediate veterinary care.
2. Dilated Cardiomyopathy/DCM is the #2 killer with a 21% Dane mortality rate. It's thought to be an inherited disease with males more prone than females. There's good information on symptoms and tests is here: <http://www.ivis.org/proceedings/navc/2005/SAE/044.pdf?LA=1> The first line of defense is veterinary monitoring of the heart and annual echocardiography if irregularities are detected.
3. The mortality rate for cancers in Danes is 12%, making it the #3 killer of Great Danes. The most common cancer in Danes is osteosarcoma and is most frequently found in the long bones (legs) of dogs age 7 YO. The risk of osteosarcoma is slightly lower in females than in males. In addition, the incidence of osteosarcoma 65% higher for castrated males and 34% higher for spayed females. Second to osteosarcoma is lymphoma, and gender has not been identified as a risk factor for this or most other cancers. The first line of defense against cancer is regular owner "hand exams" and owner monitoring for sudden changes in body functions or behavior. Regular senior Dane veterinary exams should include x-rays of the long bones, an abdominal ultrasound, and bloodwork.

Even sadder than these statistics, over 50% of Great Danes die from all causes before the age of 8 YO, so regular veterinary care for Danes of all ages is critical. Remember that we are our Danes only health advocates, so please don't hesitate to ask your vet for referral to a specialist if you don't feel that you are getting acceptable answers and solutions.

As always, thanks for educating yourself to help your own Danes and other owners!

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*"A dog is the only thing on earth that loves you more than he loves himself." - Josh Billings*

