

Pulmonary Hypertension

Pulmonary hypertension (PHT) is a term used to describe an abnormally elevated pulmonary artery pressure. This elevated pulmonary artery pressure leads to decreased blood flow to the lungs and increases the workload of the right side of the heart.

Clinical signs of pulmonary hypertension usually involve increased respiratory effort or distress, coughing, exercise intolerance, and exertional collapse. PHT can lead to right-sided heart failure which appears as ascites (fluid in the abdomen).

In veterinary medicine, pulmonary hypertension is most commonly diagnosed non-invasively through an echocardiogram (heart ultrasound).

The causes of pulmonary hypertension are often due to:

- Chronic left-sided heart disease
- Chronic severe bronchial/lung disease
- Pulmonary thromboembolism
- Heartworm disease
- Congenital cardiac shunts

Treatment of pulmonary hypertension is aimed at identifying and treating any underlying causes. Dogs with severe pulmonary hypertension may require immediate hospitalization and oxygen therapy. The prognosis is very variable.