



Pneumonia in the Irish Wolfhound

Essential Information for Owners

Pneumonia in an Irish Wolfhound is a severe and rapidly life-threatening condition which must be treated urgently.

It has been recognized for decades amongst owners of Irish Wolfhounds (IWH) that they are susceptible to respiratory problems in particular pneumonia. Pneumonia in IWH may not present with typical symptoms such as a cough and in many cases the condition is fatal because it is not recognized in time to treat it effectively. Another problem facing IWH is that currently the most appropriate treatment for the condition remains unclear. A further concern is that IWH are a minority breed and therefore many vets won't have come across the condition as they don't see IWH very often.

It is crucial that IWH owners and their vets are aware of this condition, particularly the importance of rapid treatment. The IWHG have compiled this information sheet using information that has been gathered from clinical details and outcomes of the cases that we are aware of and is in addition informed by the IWHG's ongoing study of bronchopneumonia.

We hope in having compiled these notes we can help improve the outcome of IWH with bronchopneumonia. We hope that you will find the details in the document helpful. We would also value your assistance in helping gather information for the study into bronchopneumonia being carried out by Angela Bodey BSc, BVSc, PhD, MRCVS and Mark Dunning MA VetMB PhD, CertSAM, DipECVIM-CA, MRCVS. Drs Bodey and Dunning are working with the IWHG collecting case studies and analysing the data. The aim is to identify significant factors that influence the development and outcome of this condition and if possible the most appropriate treatment. For further information about the project or to provide clinical details of a case of bronchopneumonia please check our webpage <http://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/pneumonia.html> If you have any questions please contact Miranda Brace via email: mirandabraehead@gmail.com; your help would be much appreciated.

A PICTURE OF PNEUMONIA



This is the typical stance of an Irish Wolfhound with pneumonia, with the head and neck stretched forward. The eyes are preoccupied and dull, she is reluctant to lie down and if she does is unable to lie on her side. The photograph was taken as soon as the dog became ill. Her owner, who knew the signs of pneumonia, said "When the photo was taken she had difficulty breathing, couldn't lie down, and had a temperature of 40.2 degrees C".

<p>Recognizing pneumonia</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sudden onset. • Difficulties in breathing. • Head lowered and stretched forward level with the back, neck extended to expand the airway as much as possible. • Dog reluctant/unable to lie on its side. • Dog may or may not be coughing • Temperature may be very high – but a normal temperature does not necessarily preclude a diagnosis of pneumonia. • Their lungs may appear clear on x-ray. • There have been cases of pneumonia in wolfhounds following a lungworm infection. (Lung worm is no longer restricted to the south of England, and is present in most areas)
<p>Treating pneumonia</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • URGENTLY! if there is any doubt, treat with the antibiotics first, and argue later – do not take a wait and see attitude. • Most vets will want to administer a combination of antibiotics intravenously, as it is important to hit it hard and fast. • Fluids intravenously should be considered – but care should be taken if your wolfhound has a heart condition. • Drug treatment needs to continue for at least 4-6 weeks. • Anti-inflammatory drugs may also be of value, particularly if the temperature is high • Steam and coupage can assist in moving the congestion from the lungs • If your wolfhound has had pneumonia, it is more likely to have it again.
<p>Critical Timing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>If response to treatment is not seen within 24 hours we would encourage your vet to speak to a specialist as time is always of the essence with this condition.</u> • A long course of treatment for 4-6 weeks would be advised as this condition is often recurrent and recurrence may be reduced if an appropriate duration antibiotic course is used.
<p>Vet Aware</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Speak to your vet to ensure he is aware that Irish Wolfhounds are susceptible to pneumonia and present with atypical symptoms. Give him a copy of the Guidelines for Vets and ask him to read it and keep it on your dogs file</u>
<p>Advice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you are worried about pneumonia and wish to speak with an experienced owner please contact – mirandabraehead@gmail.com or jean.timmins2016@gmail.com