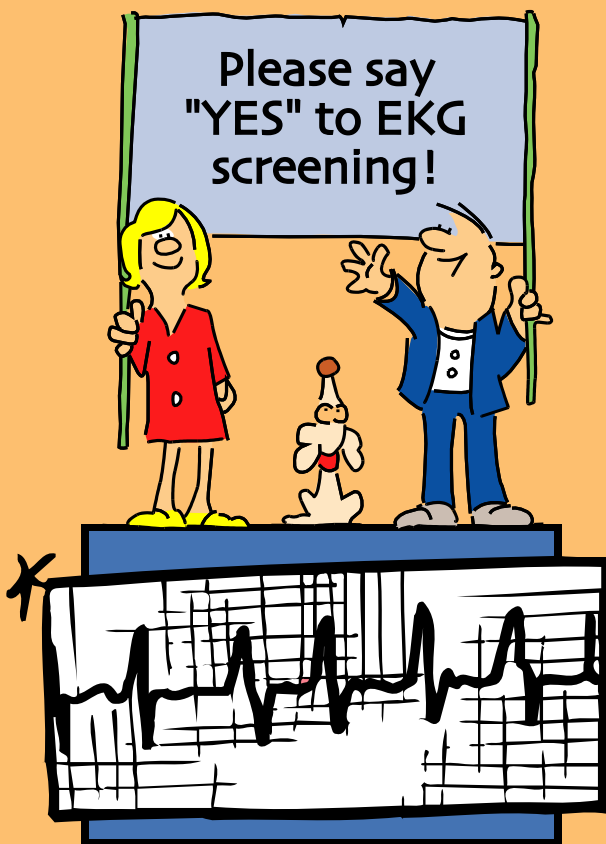


EKG SCREENING FOR Susceptible Breeds

Boxers and Doberman Pinschers, Great Danes, English Cocker Spaniels and several other breeds are prone to a heart condition called cardiomyopathy. Up to half of all dogs of these breeds will eventually develop the disease. In cardiomyopathy the heart muscle thins and deteriorates, eventually leading to heart failure. 5% of Doberman Pinschers die from it each year.

Cardiomyopathy can start as early as 6 months of age or as late as 15 years of age, but most affected dogs start developing symptoms at 6-8 years of age. By the time symptoms develop, the heart is already severely damaged. Life expectancy at this stage is usually short - months to a year or two.



Diagnosing the disease early, and starting the affected pet on heart medication, can prolong life expectancy for these dogs by 1 to 3 years. Echocardiography is the most accurate way to diagnose the disease, but many dogs will start to show abnormalities on an EKG in the early stages of the disease. A simple EKG strip, done once a year for less than \$35, is a screening test for cardiomyopathy that should be done annually for all susceptible breeds over one year of age, along with their annual vaccinations.

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