

Chronic Active Hepatitis (CAH) in Dobermanns

courtesy of Animal Info Publications

What is CAH?

It is an inflammatory disease of the liver that causes serious degeneration and chronic liver disease. Symptoms don't usually appear until at least half of the liver has been destroyed. They include vomiting, diarrhoea, weight loss, fluid accumulation in the abdomen and jaundice (yellow tinge to the whites of the eyes and to light areas of skin). A diagnosis is through blood testing and liver biopsy. If the disease appears in a dog under six years of age, there is usually sudden liver failure and most dogs die quickly. For those developing the problem after six years, the problem becomes more chronic. It can occur at any age but is most common in middle aged or older dogs.



Is there any treatment?

There is no specific treatment but symptoms may be alleviated with low fat, low protein diets, intravenous fluids, antibiotics and corticosteroid drugs. Prognosis is not good. Your veterinarian will be invaluable in trying to maximise the quality of life if your dog is affected.

How can I avoid buying a dog with CAH?

There is no genetic testing available for the Dobermann. Affected dogs and their parents should not be bred so this is something you can ask your breeder about.