

## What is wrong with my puppy?

I got a new puppy, and he is doing strange things. He falls asleep after he eats, he seems to have trouble having a bowel movement.

We took our new puppy to our veterinarian and after doing some testing found that he may have a liver shunt, also known as a portosystemic shunt. It is a congenital defect and found in several breeds, including Miniature Schnauzers, Yorkshire Terriers, Maltese, Cairn Terriers and some large breed dogs as Labradors, Golden Retrievers, Irish Wolfhounds and Australian Cattle Dogs. Typically the dog is small in stature compared to what it should be and will have a variety of behavioral abnormalities. The doctor may strongly recommend further diagnostic testing and even referral to an internal medicine specialist for further work-up and diagnostics to determine if that is the problem and what can be done for the puppy.

When a puppy has a liver shunt, the liver cannot properly get rid of toxins from the body and therefore they continually circulate toxic proteins and the liver cannot properly form to help with this process. Which leads to several of the signs and symptoms that are typically seen with this.

In some cases, after getting the diagnosis, it is then determined whether it can be surgically repaired by a board-certified surgeon or treated with medical management and special food, the puppy can live a fairly normal life but just may not have the longevity as a normal healthy puppy.

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