

JUST COMS DOWN

What You Need To Know About COMS Syndrome In Dogs

WHAT IS IT?

CAUDAL

the posterior;
the back

OCCIPTAL

the rearmost part of the
cerebellum

MALFORMATION

an abnormally formed
part of the body

SYNDROME

a group of symptoms
that occur together

COMS is a syndrome in which the back of the skull is malformed, which compresses the cerebellum. This can lead to a build up of cerebrospinal fluid and pain. It's the dog equivalent of humans' Chiari Syndrome.

WHAT BREEDS MAY HAVE IT?

COMS is generally found in smaller breeds. It's *most common* in **Cavalier King Charles Spaniels**, but it can be found in:

Yorkshire Terrier
Miniature/Toy
Poodle
Maltese
Pomeranian
Pug
Chihuahua

Bichon Frise
Miniature
Pinscher
West Highland
White Terrier
Shih Tzu
Pekingese

HOW IS IT DIAGNOSED?

The most common symptoms of COMS include: yelping from neck/head pain, scratching at the neck/head from pain, dizziness/falling, and limb weakness. If you notice these symptoms together, you should always **CONTACT YOUR VET**.

Diagnosis of COMS includes a full physical exam and an MRI of the head and neck, which will reveal whether or not a dog has the malformation.

HOW IS IT TREATED?

There are several approaches to treating the symptoms of COMS. First is through medications. They have two jobs:

1. Reduce fluid build up of spinal fluid
2. Minimize pain

Most common prescriptions for fluid reduction are prednisone and omeprazole and for pain are gabapentin and tramadol. In rare and severe cases, surgery (often with a second follow up surgery) can be an option in correcting the malformation.