**Prophylactic Gastropexy (aka Stomach Tack)**

Prophylactic gastropexy surgery, (aka elective stomach tacking), is when the stomach is tacked down to the body wall. It can be done with one moderately sized incision (about 6”) or with a laparoscope (multiple ½” incisions). There are numerous surgical ways to fix the stomach to the body wall. The most common are incisional, circumcostal, and belt loop. Incisional is when one incision is made in the stomach and a second is made in the body wall and they are sutured together. Circumcostal is when a piece of the stomach is wrapped around a rib. Belt loop is when a piece of the stomach is wrapped around a piece of muscle from the abdominal wall.

When a stomach tack is performed on a healthy stomach, the dog heals quickly and there are few complications. When a tack is performed on an unhealthy, bloated stomach, there is a greater chance for the tack to not hold or for other complications to occur. That is why I feel that electively tacking a Dane is much better than tacking after a bloat or GDV. LET ME BE 100% CLEAR – an elective stomach tack will not prevent bloat, but it will prevent GDV. So, the stomach can still fill with air or food, but it cannot twist on itself. Since bloat often leads to GDV, and bloat has a much better outcome than GDV, when bloat occurs in a tacked Dane it will have a better outcome than an un-tacked Dane. Elective stomach tacking can be done at any age, but dogs heal faster and have a quicker recovery when it is done earlier rather than later in life. Ideally, I would suggest by or before the age of 2 years. When a healthy Dane is tacked, the risks are the same as any procedure that requires anesthesia. Post-operative care is that of any abdominal surgery, including keeping them quiet for 14 days, monitoring the incision for swelling or discharge, etc. The only additional post-operative discharge instruction I give for an elective tack is to feed small frequent meals for 7-10 days after surgery. The average cost of an elective tack is $500-$800, but can it can vary greatly.

I recommend prophylactic gastropexy for all Danes when they are spayed and neutered. While breeders usually recognize the signs of bloat or GDV quickly, many pet owners will not. It makes sense for the pet owners to have their Dane tacked while being spayed or neutered to decrease the chance of them missing the bloat/GDV and losing their dog. Some breeders will write this into their pet puppy contracts. Also, for the breeders that spay or neuter their Dane later in life, after breeding or showing, I recommend they tack their Dane at that time. Older Danes are more likely to bloat/GDV, so you decrease the risk by tacking the stomach when you spay or neuter them.

I also recommend prophylactic gastropexy for any dogs that have bloated before and were successfully decompressed with simethicone, by passing a tube, or any other way. Once you know your Dane is likely to bloat, it is likely they will also get GDV. Some people choose to electively tack if they know that bloat/GDV runs in the pedigree of their Dane. Another reason people choose to electively tack is if their Dane easily stresses or will be traveling or showing a lot.