

# Canine Nasal Disease

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## KEYWORDS

- Rhinitis • Nasal discharge • Epistaxis • Sinonasal aspergillosis
- Nasal adenocarcinoma

## KEY POINTS

- For dogs with epistaxis unaccompanied by mucoid or mucopurulent nasal discharge, assessment of coagulation status and blood pressure should precede diagnostic investigation aimed at identifying nasal disease.
- Investigation of oral health, including dental probing and dental radiographs as needed, is warranted before more expensive or invasive diagnostics are undertaken in dogs with nasal discharge.
- Primary bacterial rhinitis is uncommon as a cause of nasal disease signs, but antibiotics often result in temporary improvement in signs related to secondary bacterial infections.
- In retrospective studies, nasal neoplasia is often the most common cause of chronic nasal discharge or epistaxis in dogs.
- If the dog's owners are willing to undertake expensive therapies (eg, radiation therapy for nasal carcinoma), should they be indicated, computed tomography or magnetic resonance imaging is indicated early in the disease evaluation.

## INTRODUCTION

### *Nature of the Problem*

Canine nasal disease is commonly encountered in small animal practice. Clinical signs are similar regardless of the specific cause of nasal disease (**Box 1**), but some signs are more often associated with specific disease process (eg, facial deformity is more often identified in dogs with nasal neoplasia than other causes of nasal disease). In addition, nasal signs may be identified in dogs with systemic rather than nasal disease (**Box 2**).

A thorough history and physical examination, followed by a stepwise diagnostic evaluation, often identifies a specific diagnosis and thus facilitates an accurate prognosis and development of an optimum treatment plan. Several studies have described either a specific clinical disease that results in nasal signs,<sup>1–7</sup> or have described diagnostic modalities used in dogs with nasal signs.<sup>8–14</sup> Only a few

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Vet Clin Small Anim 44 (2014) 75–89

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.cvsim.2013.08.002>

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**Box 1****Clinical signs associated with canine nasal disease**

Nasal discharge

Serous

Mucoid

Mucopurulent

Purulent

Sanguineous/epistaxis

Mixed

Sneezing

Pawing or rubbing at muzzle

Facial deformity, asymmetry, or ulceration

Epiphora

Loss of pigmentation of the nasal planum

Open mouth breathing

Halitosis

Stertor

Coughing

Seizure (rare)

retrospective studies have investigated the frequency with which specific diagnosis is determined to cause nasal signs in dogs.<sup>15–18</sup> Understanding which diagnoses are most likely is helpful not only in prioritizing diagnostic testing but also in informing pet owners as they consider which of many diagnostic options to authorize. Retrospective studies undertaken at referral institutions might provide a biased representation of the relative importance of some conditions because many common disorders could be treated by local veterinarians without need for referral. Nonetheless, retrospective studies provide useful information regarding the most common causes of nasal disease (**Fig. 1**).

**Box 2****Systemic diseases processes with nasal manifestations**

Coagulopathy

Primary hemostatic defects (ie, thrombocytopenia/thrombocytopathia)

Secondary hemostatic defects (eg, vitamin K rodenticide antagonists)

Severe hypertension

Hyperviscosity syndromes (eg, multiple myeloma, ehrlichiosis)

Systemic infection (eg, distemper virus)

Dysautonomia

Vomiting/regurgitation

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