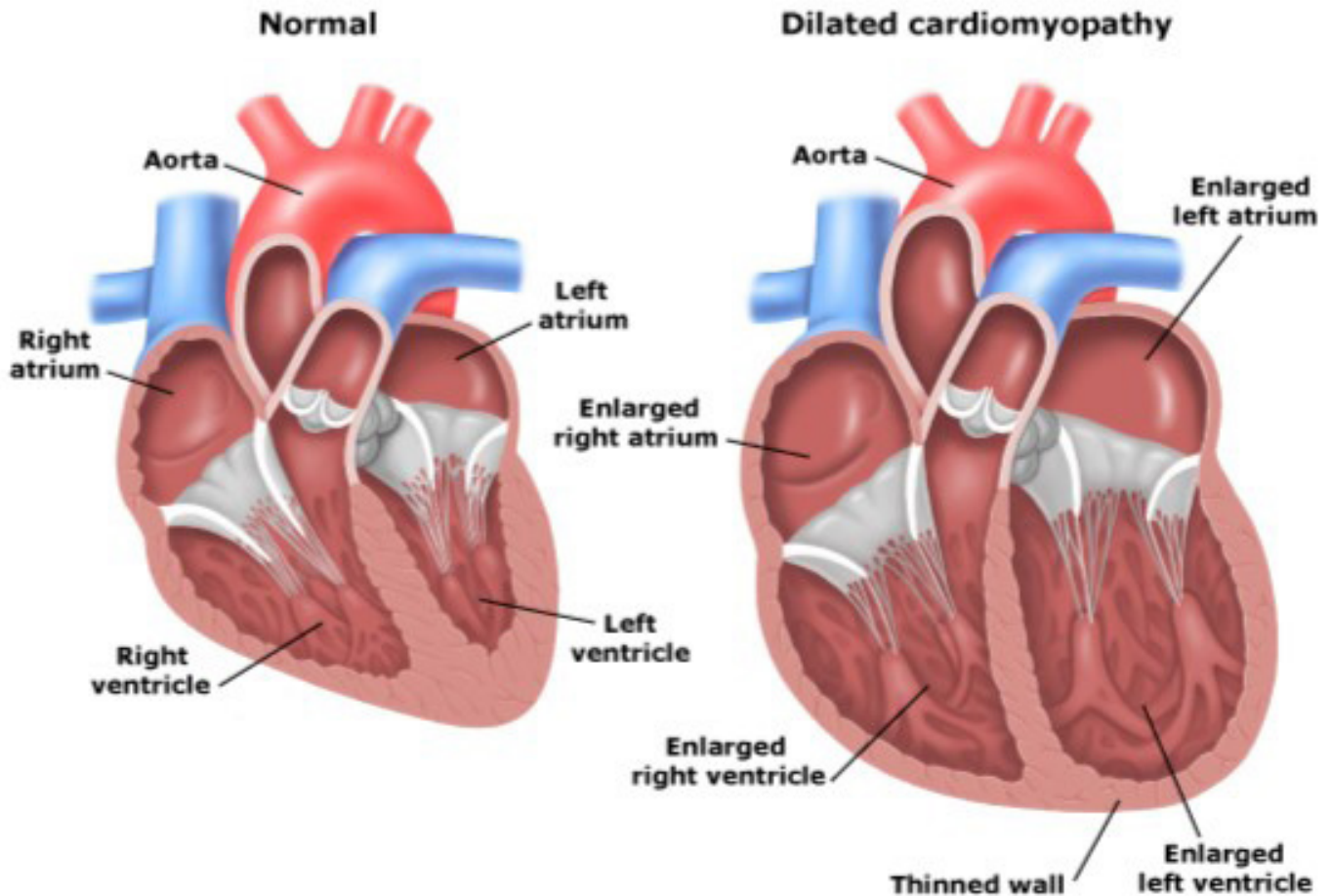




Canine Dilated Cardiomyopathy



Dilated Cardiomyopathy (DCM) is a condition in which the heart becomes weak and enlarged, and does not contract well. Its cause is most often unknown, but often genetically based.

DCM can affect both the left and right sides of the heart with either side being more severely affected. Typically both the ventricle and atrium enlarge, resulting in the ventricle losing its ability to pump blood out to the body and/or lungs. If the left side of the heart fails, fluid backs up into the lungs. If the right side of the heart fails, fluid backs up in the abdomen or space surrounding the lungs.

Unfortunately DCM is usually progressive, and therapy is aimed at controlling fluid retention, decreasing heart rate, and helping the heart contract more effectively. Often this can improve length and quality of life even though DCM is not curable.