

# Information from the GSDshowlist

## MEDIA CONTACTS:

Bradford Brady

Director of Development & Communications

AKC Canine Health Foundation

Email: [bradford.brady@akcCHF.org](mailto:bradford.brady@akcCHF.org)

Phone: 919-334-4023

News Release

For Immediate Release

AKC Canine Health Foundation Announces New Research to Tackle Bloat in Dogs  
RALEIGH, N.C. (June 1, 2017) Gastric Dilatation Volvulus (GDV, or bloat) is a serious problem for many canine breeds, but little is truly known about the causes of this deadly disease. While any larger dog can be affected, targeted breed-specific research can help advance understanding of potential genetic factors that may predispose dogs to developing bloat.

The AKC Canine Health Foundation (CHF) announces a new research grant to Dr. Michael Harkey of the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center to study the genetics of bloat and its association with specific genes of the immune system and gut bacteria. The research grant is entitled, "The Genetics of Bloat in German Shepherd Dogs: The Roles of Immune System Genes and the Gut Microbiome." Dr. Harkey's team recently completed a study in Great Danes in which they showed a significant association of three genes of the dogs' immune system with bloat. For each of the three genes, one allele (variant) was found at high frequency in dogs with bloat, and the presence of any one of these "risk" alleles tripled the chance the dog would experience bloat during its life. Their findings will be published in an upcoming issue of the American Journal of Veterinary Research. The research team also showed that the bacterial population living in the intestinal tract (the gut microbiome) was altered in dogs with bloat and in dogs that carry these "risk" alleles, possibly predisposing them to bloat.

CHF's CEO, Dr. Diane Brown, states that, "While we don't yet know if other dogs show this same association of genetics and the gut microbiome with GDV, this new research will explore whether this association occurs in another breed of dog, the German Shepherd Dog." According to Dr. Harkey, "Our hope is to define genetic markers for identification of at-risk dogs of all breeds, and ultimately, to design appropriate probiotic or dietary therapies to prevent GDV. This funding will carry us closer to these goals." With great concern for the health of their breed and the devastating effects bloat has

had on so many dogs, the American German Shepherd Dog Charitable Foundation, Inc. (AGSDCF) has unanimously decided to donate full financial support to CHF for this grant. “This is all about giving back to our dogs through this important research,” says Debra Ann Hokkanen, President of the AGSDCF. “We applaud our Board of Directors and supporters who honor and remember their dogs through this donation. We are very proud to have the opportunity to work with CHF on this project as we give back to our dogs and to the remarkable people who care for them.”

Dr. Harkey is seeking samples from German Shepherd Dogs, and will send sample collection kits to those with eligible dogs. He can be contacted at [mharkey@fhcrc.org](mailto:mharkey@fhcrc.org) or 206-667-3369.