



## Paroxysmal Respiration

Paroxysmal respiration is also known as reverse sneezing. Reverse sneezing is a condition in which air is pulled into the nose very quickly. It is increased inspiratory effort through the nose and it can be a loud, sometimes violent, inspiratory snorting sound. Reverse sneezing can occur without any warning and can last seconds to minutes.

Reverse sneezing is not a harmful condition itself and the animal is typically normal before and after a reverse sneezing episode.



The exact cause of reverse sneezing is not known, however, episodes can be triggered by any form of irritation of the nose, sinuses or membrane lining of the nasopharynx (upper part of the throat) which triggers spasms of the muscles that form the pharynx (throat). Examples of irritants can include: allergies, smoke, odors, etc.

Diagnosis is based on clinical signs and medical history. However, reverse sneezing can be suggestive of nasopharyngeal disease such as nasal foreign bodies (grasses, seeds, pollens), nasal mites, viral infections, fungal disease (aspergillosis, cryptococcosis), neoplasia (masses), nasal polyps (growths in the nasopharynx), lymphocytic plasmacytic rhinitis (chronic inflammation of the membrane lining in the nose), epiglottic entrapment of the soft palate (soft tissue located in the back part of the mouth), etc.

Therefore, depending on your pet's history and clinical signs, the following tests, procedures, and treatments may be recommended for proper diagnosis and ruling out of other conditions that may cause similar signs.

- Physical Exam
- Blood tests
- Radiographs +/- sedation
- CT +/- sedation
- Rhinoscopy +/- biopsy
- Nasal flushing
- Allergy testing



Treatment is generally not necessary for reverse sneezing. If an underlying condition that is causing the reverse sneezing is diagnosed, treatment will vary. Reverse sneezing episodes generally last from seconds to a minute or two and your pet will return to normal once the episode is over. During the episode, gently stroking your pet's neck can be helpful to try to calm them.

Watching your pet during an episode of reverse sneezing for the first time can certainly be worrying as it may seem and sound like there could be something stuck in the throat. If you are unsure what your pet is experiencing is a reverse sneezing episode, taking a video to show to your veterinarian is a good idea. Most importantly, if at any point you are concerned that your pet is struggling to breathe or may truly have something stuck in their throat, take your pet to the veterinarian immediately. As always, please contact us if you have any questions or concerns.

Dr Stephanie