

## VETERINARY NOTES ON THE BELGIAN BREEDS by Libbye Miller DVM



The Belgian breeds (Malinois, Sheepdog, Tervuren, and Laekenois) are not very commonly seen in the average veterinary practice.

To help you feel comfortable with these rare breeds and their well informed owners, here are some notes based on experience.



**1.** When doing blood work, you may find perfectly healthy Belgians with physiologic leukopenia. They may also have RBC counts and hematocrits higher than expected for healthy dogs. (JAVMA 2000:216:866-871)



**2.** Belgians tend to be lean, muscular dogs under their fur.



Don't be fooled by their coat, they may not be as large as they look.

**3.** These breeds have a higher incidence of epilepsy than the average population.

**4.** In collecting reports of anesthetic complications in these breeds, it has been noted that some of them are extremely sensitive to Acepromazine.

Even a tiny dose added to their pre-anesthetic medications may leave some Belgians unable to stand 18-24 hours post op.

Some require IV fluids to fully recover. I would discourage the use of this drug in these breeds.

I have had several reports of death following the use of Rompun in Belgians. They do not seem to handle it well at all.





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