

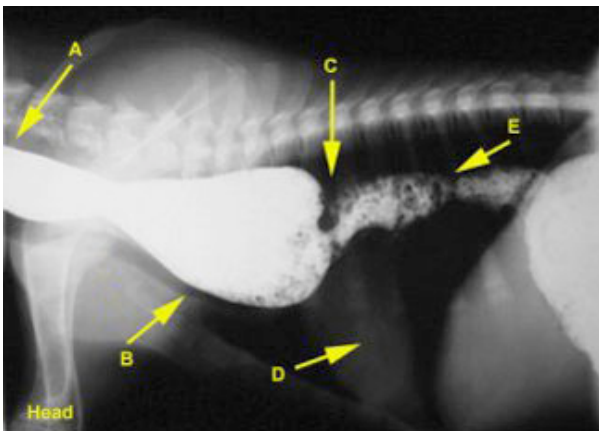
# Persistent Right Aortic Arch (PRAA)

PRAA is a congenital malformation of the great vessels of the heart and their branches which produce a band that cause constriction of the esophagus. This eventually leads to obstruction of the esophagus. The esophagus is the tube which brings food from the mouth to the stomach.

This condition is present at birth, but clinical signs usually don't become evident until the time of weaning. Early diagnosis and treatment of a PRAA will improve the prognosis. Most owners will observe a puppy or kitten eating, but then regurgitate its food back up in a short amount of time.

The diagnosis is made by introducing a special dye into the esophagus and taking radiographs (x-rays). Surgical correction is the only successful treatment. Medical therapy is only palliative at best and is not recommended.

To correct a PRAA, a thoracotomy is performed and the tight band of tissue is removed which alleviates the obstruction. It is important to do this surgery as early as possible to prevent permanent irreversible damage to the esophagus. This surgery is best performed by a Board Certified Surgeon.



Barium Swallow on a puppy with a PRAA

a- dilated proximal esophagus

b - out-pouching of the esophagus in front of the PRAA

c - narrow area at the site of the PRAA, the tight band that causes narrowing

d - heart

e - some food that has moved past the constriction



Minnie, postoperative PRAA.