

## Pure Dog Talk 471 – Myth Busting in Veterinary Medicine

Pure dog Talk is the voice of purebred dogs. We talked to the legends of the sport and give you the tips and tools to create an awesome life with your purebred dog. From showing to preservation breeding from competitive obedience to field work from agility to therapy dogs, and all the fun in-between. Your passion is our purpose. All right crew, check it. Dog events are happening for exhibitors who are able and willing to attend these events. It feels as if our tribe has been reunited once again. Meanwhile, for folks who are continuing to feel safest staying at home and away from crowds, and for folks who are driving long haul between far-flung events, I got ya. I've been working hard to bring you all podcast episodes that help you feel connected to our larger community and offer opportunities for education and entertainment, no matter how you have managed through this truly overwhelming year.

One of my favorite events this year is the monthly virtual Pure Dog Talk After Dark for patrons of our podcast. Anybody can join this fabulous community of dog enthusiasm by visiting the website and clicking on the become a patron link on the home page. And while you're there zooming around on the site, you might think about checking out our shopping tab too. We've linked dog show vendors from all around the country, so you can help support them during this really grueling loss of income suffered due to a lack of events. There's even a swag link that lets you order your Pure Dog Talk, t-shirt sweatshirts, phone case, mask, ringside towel, and so much more. Like the NPR of dogdom, Pure Dog Talk is here for you every day, to make sense out of everyday things, to add nuance to your understanding and tools, your tech box. To bring history to life and propel the living history of purebred dogs into the future. So check out the links at [www.puredogtalk.com](http://www.puredogtalk.com). Your support adds up to a huge voice for purebred dogs.

### Laura Reeves:

Welcome to Pure Dog Talk. I am your host, Laura Reeves, and I have one of my very favorite of all time podcast guests, Dr. Marty Greer. Our veterinary voice is joining us and we're going to do kind of a fun episode. This was by multiple listener request I might add. We're doing sort of the old wives tales, a little bit of myth-busting on veterinary medicine and Marty is going to weigh in with us about whether we think this is truth or fiction. We've got some topics that we're going to talk about. One of the first ones that was brought up, that was a listener request, was talking about when we have bitches in our household, multiple, do they tend to cycle together in their heat cycle? So that's a pretty common old wives tale. Everybody says all my bitches come in together, talk to us.

### Dr. Marty Greer:

And I think it's true. I really do believe that that happens. There's hormones, there's pheromones, it's called convent syndrome or dormitory syndrome in humans and absolutely it happens in dogs too. I lived in a dorm when I was an undergrad for four years. Yes, it is true that the girls all start to cycle together, so God help you. Of course I went to school so long ago that there were women's dorms and men's dorms, and they locked the women's dorms at night, which kind of cracked us up because it's like they locked us in and they should have really locked the guys out, that was really the problem. But anyway, yes, there's no question about them cycling together and there's a reason for that. They go back to wolves and it was thought that wolves would cycle together so that there would be additional mothers available to lactate, should puppies be orphaned or otherwise the bitch wasn't available to nurse her puppies.

And that's also why people think there's a false pregnancy. Every dog that has a heat cycle has a false pregnancy, every single one. They all have a progesterone rise, they all stay high for 60 to 65 days and they all dropped their progesterone at around that 60 to 65 day mark pregnant or not. Some bitches will lactate, some bitches will have clinical signs of false pregnancy, but they all do that if they've got a normal ovulatory cycle. So for the people that think their dogs don't have false pregnancies.

Oh yes, yes they do and I've even seen one dog go into labor and I said to the owner, "No, there are no puppies." And she went as far as saying, please take an x-ray and I, of course complied because I didn't want to miss a single puppy on palpation, but yes, we do see bitches that will do that. So yes, they cycled together, yes they all come into heat at the same time and yes, they start excreting or secreting a pheromone weeks before they come into heat so that they can start recruiting male dogs so that they are available at the time that the bitch is ready to breed. So absolutely positively yes. There's an efficiency to that system.

**Laura Reeves:**

We were talking about boy dogs, and I mentioned to you before we started recording. I have a bitch in season and three males, four males, two of which are experienced stud dogs and they are losing their crackers. I mean, it's a good thing I have a soundproofed studio because they're out there screaming and the bitch is inside in her crate, they can't see or smell or anything. Talk to us about A, how do we as owners, what's some good ideas for managing that? And B, let's go through the whole concept of this is why boys do this.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

And the best way to manage it is going to be drugs. I'm just going to tell you, and I don't mean just for you, I mean for the dogs,

**Laura Reeves:**

Lots of drugs for me.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

I can't prescribe for the owners, but I can prescribe for the dogs. And so, yes, there's no reason not to put a male dog on some kind of an anti-anxiety medication, whether it's trazodone or gabapentin or alprazolam or something to calm them down. Acepromazine is not an anti-anxiety drug, it's a sedation drug and yeah in this case, it probably wouldn't be a terrible idea, but overall acepromazine should not be used for anti-anxiety medication. There are lots of good drugs on the market. Your veterinarian can prescribe them for you. They are mostly not controlled substances and yes, they can help considerably and making you a lot more sane, but it will not take away the sex drive. It is not birth control.

So don't think that putting your dog on a drug that's going to make them a little bit drowsy is going to keep him from busting through the fence or through the door and up the stairs and around the corner and snatching her up and having his way with her because those boys are highly motivated. The drive to have a sexual encounter is a very, very strong drive in every species and we all know that and you can't prevent it. We've got pictures of dogs that know how to unlatch their kennel door, walk across the top of a kennel, drop down into the females pen, breed the female, and then walk back out and get back into their own kennel.

We have proof that these dogs are doing this because we now have video in people's kennels so it's a fascinating study in canine behavior, but yes, the boys do have a pretty strong drive and the females are very cooperative at that point. In most cases, it takes two to tango. So yes, you can use drugs, keeping them separated physically is useful, but there is nothing that you can do that they can't undo faster because they are spending 23 hours and 49 minutes a day trying to figure out a way to get that particular encounter to happen. And you spent 11 minutes that day figuring out a way for it not to happen. They're going to win. They're going to win.

**Laura Reeves:**

The stories I could tell you. I had an Akita, it was a client dog, it wasn't even a client. It was bitch in season, dog's losing his mind and I'm like, okay, fine. So it was appropriate weather so I said, I'm just going to put him in a crate in the van. This is my sturdiest crate, I know he can't smell anything, he's not going to, you know. Oh yeah, shredded this crate it looked like a bloodbath. I mean, there was blood everywhere where he had shredded the crate getting out of it. And this is just one of 40 years worth of this, right?

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Oh yeah.

**Laura Reeves:**

So drugs are good. Now here's another, this is a good, myth-busting one. Thoughts on chlorophyll? Give the bitch chlorophyll when she comes in season immediately and then reduces the odor. No? Yes?

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

It's going to help to a small extent, it's not going to be enough to cover up everything. No, charcoal, chlorophyll, vanilla, Vicks, you name it. All the things that people try. Yes, you can put vanilla on the bitch. Yes, you can put Vicks up his nostrils, but you're not going to overcome every single molecule. Remember dogs have probably 10,000 times the number of sense cells and inside their nose, they have scrolls of bone that have all this ability to scent and they're downright ears will help direct the set. Oh yeah, they were programmed to be successful and they frequently are in spite of your best efforts. So anybody that tells you that they've never had an accidental breeding that owns both males and females that are intact at their house is either lying to you or it hasn't happened to them yet because at some point.

**Laura Reeves:**

I was one of those people and the 13 year old Ibizan Hound that's out there, we call him the unindicted felon because he managed it. After 40 years, few years back, he got one of the wirehaired pointers.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Yep. I was at a meeting that was put on by one of the pet food companies and I was one of the speakers on the program. And another speaker was up talking about his research kennel of dogs and he walked in one morning and found two dogs tied through a chain link fence, which I still can't understand physically how.

**Laura Reeves:**

I was going to ask you if that was an old wives tale or that's actually happened.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

It's a thing he walked in and no kidding there was a tie through the chain link.

**Laura Reeves:**

That hurts, that just hurts.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

So it just blows my mind, it would require a lot of alignment to get everything to work well, and a lot of cooperation.

**Laura Reeves:**

So that can happen and I've got two dogs out here trying to get a natural breeding and they can't manage it. Come on man I gave you a rug, I damn near gave you a cigarette. Come on. What are we doing here?

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

I know. Well, some of it's body type, some of it's skillset. Body type is not good on corgis they're not quite as bad as bulldogs, but they're not real skilled but after a couple of efforts, the boys figure out the whole thing. It is absolutely true that there is a certain learning curve that goes with this. We have male dogs that come into the practice to be collected for semen freezing or semen processing and some of them have been told, especially the pet dogs have been told, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no by their owners a million and a half times to the point that they won't develop an erection in front of that particular person, because they've been told no.

And so sometimes they have to make two or three trips back to the practice so that they can learn that having a sexual encounter is indeed an acceptable behavior for them, but it does require some practice. And so with a little bit of experience and occasionally some pharmaceutical intervention, we can get these guys to eventually figure it out. Now, if it's an old male dog, it may be orthopedic issue. He may have arthritis or spondylosis in his back or something but yes, there is no question that it does require some practice for some dogs and other dogs seem to be naturals at it, shall we say.

**Laura Reeves:**

Gifted, let's go with gifted.

Hang tight. Guys got a little bit of information for you. We'll be right back to the podcast in a minute. All right crew, looking to enhance your breeding program spring into action with Embark's all-inclusive DNA testing for breeders. One Embark for breeders kit provides breed relevant genetic health tests, physical traits, and genetic COI test results for each of your dogs. Embark's test results are accepted by the orthopedic foundation for animals for all conditions where OFA has an established DNA registry. Find out why thousands of breeders have trusted Embark to help manage their breeding program, from improving genetic health and diversity to screening for disease mutations, understanding traits, and a lot more. To save on better health visit [embarkvet.com](http://embarkvet.com) and use code Pure Dog Talk to enjoy \$20 off each kit in your order. That's [embarkvet.com](http://embarkvet.com) backslash breeders and use code Pure Dog Talk.

**Laura Reeves:**

Okay, so now let's get to another old wives tale that I have had, and I know you are rolling your eyes at me, but I swear I have more than one old time breeder who absolutely swears that they can impact the sex of the puppies by when they mate the dogs and that you breed early for girls and you breed late, you get boys. Anything on that one?

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

It really depends on what you have taken deposits for are what your people want and you'll guaranteed have the opposite. And if you have a single tenant, it's always a male, it's always a boy. And you really wanted a bitch to continue your breeding program because we all know bitches are the strengths of a breeding program, not the boys. So there's a gillion boys out there in your breed, they're a dime a dozen, you don't need another one. And so what do you have in your singleton litter? You have a boy and then of course he doesn't have either testicle.

**Laura Reeves:**

Or he's mis-marked, perfect.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Something not right about him, but no, to my knowledge, there isn't a correlation. We are just hopeful that we get puppies when we're doing the breedings that we're doing because most of the breedings we do are going to be managed breedings for fresh chilled or frozen semen.

And so we just hope that there's a litter and so when we go to ultrasound the bitch, 30 days after she's bred, I go to put her on the table and the owner's staring at me and they're saying, all I want is I just want one, that's all they want is just one puppy and as soon as you put the probe on, they're like, okay, now I need four black boys and two yellow and you're like, come on 10 seconds ago you just wanted one and now you're greedy and give me a break. So yes, that is absolutely typical is that you get greedy pretty fast and it's never the right color or the right sex ratio or whatever you've taken deposits on. You're going to get the opposite.

**Laura Reeves:**

Guaranteed. Yeah.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Guaranteed.

**Laura Reeves:**

It's almost always. Okay, so that's a no. Well we're in the genre of dog breeding and false pregnancies and Pyo. You had one that I thought was really good, that females that have pyometra are always going to have a fever.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Right and the problem is they almost never do. Almost every bitch that walks through our practice front door that has a pyometra has a normal temperature, 101 to 102 is normal. They rarely run a fever, if they do run a fever with a pyometra, it probably means that the uterus is already leaking pus either up the oviduct into the abdomen or the uterus has already ruptured into the abdomen. So we rarely see it with a fever and it's really hard for me to wrap my head around it. I've been to every possible lecture I can go to about canine reproductive care and even when I was in France, listening to the speaker over there on Fontbonne, I raised my hand and I said, "Okay, I heard you just say they never got a fever, but can you explain to me why?"

And he's like, that's a really great question. Let me answer that for you tomorrow. Well, he never did and the only thing that I can come up with and other people, because I've asked a lot of people this, is the uterus is a privileged organ. It isolates proteins that aren't part of that particular individual's DNA and that allows the little puppies to develop and grow and be born as little puppies. And the uterus doesn't say, "Ooh, you don't belong here" and have some kind of an immunologic response that kicks it out. If we had any organ that did that, the uterus would never be successful at producing puppies. So I don't think it matters what species you are, that's kind of the way it is. The other thing that's kind of interesting and a bit of an aside is that the day after pyometra surgery or the day that we're treating pyometra is, we start to see the progesterone drop and the pus start to evacuate.

If it's a managed or surgically managed pyometra, those bitches will tend to have a subnormal temperature, maybe 98, 97, just like they would, if they were whelping. And my staff is always coming to me saying, "Her temperature is only 97, should I be concerned about that?" And so I look at them and say, "Okay, what's so what just happened physiologically to the dog?" And so we go through the whole thing of her progesterone dropped, whether we took out her ovaries surgically, or whether we gave her a drug to drop her progesterone, to allow her uterus to evacuate. And now that it's dropped, isn't that similar to exactly what the body does when a bitch goes into labor and then it comes back up to normal and they go, oh yes, yes that would be the case. So be aware.

**Laura Reeves:**

Jaw dropped, absolutely fascinating.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

I don't worry about a temperature that drops subnormal in that first 24 to 48 hours after medically or surgically managing a pyometra because they didn't come in with a fever, unless like I said, they've already had something leaking out of the uterus and I have the most amazing video of pus running up the oviduct out of the uterus and into the abdomen around the ovary and it is really not where you want that to be. Pus in the belly is a very, very bad place.

**Laura Reeves:**

Okay. So there's a reason I'm not a veterinarian, that's pus, pus is it.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

I just nailed it.

**Laura Reeves:**

Nailed it. Listeners, you can't see my face, it's green and sort of white and I'm like retching in the back of my throat. It's terrible, there it is. My dirty little secret is I have an incredibly weak stomach and just the word makes me gag a little bit. So there you go. I think that it's really fascinating how many of these old wives tales we have, these myths that we have around our dogs that are, maybe there's a grain of truth or maybe it's just sort of anecdotally, but there's no science to back them up, right?

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Yep. Unfortunately, that's true but I think it's true in a lot of different aspects. I think it's true on human medicine. I think it's true in a lot of things. So we just have to dispel some of those myths and work through them so that people have a

better understanding of what really happens and how they can best help their veterinary team to provide great care for their dogs and cats.

**Laura Reeves:**

Absolutely. All right. Well, Marty, as always you are a joy and a treasure to my Sunday mornings at least once a month.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Well, I'm glad I could lighten your day a little bit.

**Laura Reeves:**

Just don't ever say that word to me again. No.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

You're no fun at all.

**Laura Reeves:**

I know it's true. It's true. Blood I can deal with, that P word? No, can't do that. All right. Have a great day. Thanks a lot, Marty.

**Dr. Marty Greer:**

Thank you.

As always, if you have any questions or input, we'd love to hear from you. The show notes and links to resources on today's topic are available at [puredogtalk.com](http://puredogtalk.com). Drop us a note in the comments or email to Laura at [puredogtalk.com](mailto:puredogtalk.com). Remember guys, this podcast is for you. So if you want to know something, give me a holler. We'll do a podcast for you. If you wouldn't mind, you could help me out here. Take a couple minutes to visit iTunes and give us a review. The Dog Show Superintendents Association is a proud supporter of Pure Dog Talk. Our Dog Show superintendents are the hardworking people who make the dog show function. They are advocates for education and mentorship in the purebred dog fancy. So stop by the super's desk at your next show. Tell them how much you love Pure Dog Talk and give them a shout out for their support. That's all for today. Thank you for joining us on Pure Dog Talk.