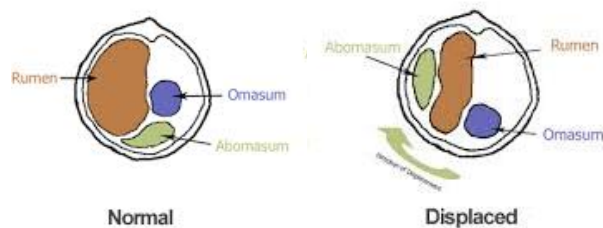


## Displaced Abomasum - LDA's and RDA's in Cattle

### Left Displaced Abomasum (LDA) (twisted stomach)

LDA or left displacement of the abomasum (the 4<sup>th</sup> stomach) is a common condition of dairy cattle that generally occurs in the first 3-4 weeks post calving. The condition is caused by several managerial, environmental and possibly hereditary factors.



LDA's are more frequently seen when the rumen is not full around the time of calving. A diet low in fibre and high in concentrate predisposes to an LDA by making the abomasum contract more slowly and by increasing gas production in the abomasum.

Cows with subclinical milk fever, clinical milk fever, ketosis, fatty liver disease, retained foetal membranes and metritis have a greater risk of developing an LDA. It should also be noted that cows that have excessive body condition at the time of calving (e.g. carryover cows) have an increased risk of developing an LDA.

Cows that develop an LDA are generally calved less than a month, have a reduced appetite, have a reduction in milk yield, lose condition rapidly and have diarrhoea. These cows often have an underlying disease such as ketosis.

We diagnose an LDA by placing a stethoscope over the left rib cage and then tapping the ribs to listen for high pitched pings (hollow drum with small amount of fluid).

We treat LDA's surgically, by opening the abdomen and manually manipulating the abomasum to its correct position and suturing the pylorus of the abomasum to the right side of the body wall. At the time of surgery, the cow will also be treated for any other concurrent diseases she may be experiencing.

The prognosis after surgical treatment is good depending on how long the cow has had the LDA for and what other diseases she has at the time of surgery.

Prevention of LDA's is largely focused on ensuring the cows/ heifers have a smooth transition into the milking herd after calving.

- Ensure cows have adequate fibre in the diet (maintain rumen fill).
- Reduce the risk of milk fever and ketosis around calving (transition feed diet).
- Concentrate feeding 2-3 weeks prior to calving (upper limit of 0.75% bodyweight/day).
- Slow introduction of concentrate diet once calved (keep at the same level as the pre-calving diet for the first 3-4 days post calving).
- Provide adequate feeding space at bunkers (heifers and less dominant cows often get bossed away from feed bunkers).
- Early intervention with other calving related diseases.

### **Right Displaced Abomasum +/- Volvulus (RDA+/-V)**

RDA's or right displacement of the abomasum are less common than LDA's in dairy cattle and can occur at any time. Affected cattle have a sudden reduction in milk yield, reduced feed intake and may show signs of colic. If the abomasum is twisted, the cows deteriorate quickly, and become sunken-eyed, have a distended abdomen, show signs of colic and may go down. RDA's are generally managed surgically by opening the abdomen, draining and untwisting the abomasum and suturing the pylorus of the abomasum to the right side of the body wall.

The prognosis is good for uncomplicated cases but poor for those cases where the abomasum is twisted.