A displaced abomasum blocks the flow of digesta to the small intestine. The form of displaced abomasum seen in 90% of cases is left displacement (LDA). It is common in early lactation—most LDAs are diagnosed in the first 2 weeks post-partum. Excess gas collects in the abomasum and it rotates under the rumen and then up the left side of the body behind the rumen, which is emptier than usual because of decreased feed intake. Surgical repositioning of the abomasum is often necessary but costly. Prevention is possible if the following risk factors can be eliminated:

- **Decreased dry matter intake (DMI):** in the weeks just prior to and after calving, reduced DMI can result in decreased rumen fill, allowing more room for the abomasum to displace.

- **Ketosis:** LDAs and ketosis are very closely related because intake is decreased in animals suffering from this metabolic disorder.

- **Calving related disorders:** Retained Placenta, uterine infections and difficult calvings are often accompanied by decreased feed intake and rumen fill.

- **Milk Fever:** milk fever occurs when the cow does not have sufficient circulating calcium to produce milk and support regular body functions. Muscles require calcium to contract and maintain their tone. Hypocalcemia can reduce both rumen and abomasal tone and motility.

- **Ration physical form:** diets containing too few coarse particles require less chewing which reduces saliva production. There is also a reduction in the fibre mat and in rumen motility, both of which are strong risk factors in the incidence of LDAs.

- **Rumen Acidosis and Laminitis:** diets containing too little effective fibre can result in rumen acidosis. Under these conditions, rumen bacteria produce toxins which enter the bloodstream. As blood moves through the laminae of the hoof they become damaged and inflamed. The resulting lameness means the animal spends more time lying down and less time standing to eat.

The abomasum (fourth compartment of the ruminant stomach) can rotate under the rumen and omasum to the left or right. Left displacements are, by far, the most common.
Over or Underconditioning: one study found that cows with body condition scores of 4 or higher (on a 1-5 scale) had a 15.7% incidence of LDA. Overconditioned cows also have an increased risk of developing Ketosis and fatty liver, which further increase the risk of LDAs.

Transition Cow Environment: the novelty of new surroundings, the presence of dominant cows, the metabolic demands of increasing milk production and a new ration can make the transition period a stressful time for both cows and heifers. Management programs which focus on cow comfort, proper ventilation and sufficient feedbunk and waterer space will reduce stress on fresh cows. Any practice which removes impediments to feed intake will decrease the risk of LDA.