

Swollen, inflamed pancreas with areas of hemorrhage



## Pancreatitis

### Diagnostic Plan

History  
Physical examination  
Blood work  
Urinalysis  
Abdominal X-rays  
Abdominal ultrasound

### Therapeutic Plan

Fluid therapy  
No oral medication or food for a limited time in order to allow the gastrointestinal tract time to rest and heal  
Antibacterials  
Pain medications  
Drugs to suppress vomiting

### Nutritional Plan

When appropriate to feed the pet again, feed small portions of a low-fat, highly digestible food or hypoallergenic food  
After the initial episode, manage hyperlipidemia, if necessary

## Pancreatitis

Your pet has pancreatitis. Pancreatitis is a serious, sometimes life-threatening inflammation of the pancreas. Common clinical signs include abdominal pain and vomiting. Cats however do not always have these signs. Cats with pancreatitis may only have occasional bouts of anorexia, vomiting, diarrhea or weight loss over time. Pancreatitis is treated with fluid therapy, special foods and medications. This client education sheet will help you learn more about pancreatitis and will review your veterinarian's instructions for your pet's care at home, as well as follow-up with the veterinary health care team.

## What You Should Know About Pancreatitis

The pancreas is a gland found in your pet's body near the stomach and small intestine. It produces enzymes that digest food. It also produces hormones such as insulin that regulate your pet's blood sugar level. Pancreatitis results when the digestive enzymes produced by the pancreas begin to digest the pancreas itself. Pancreatitis occurs in cats but the causes appear to be different from dogs. In dogs it appears to occur most commonly in middle-aged female dogs that are overweight.

### Causes

The cause is usually unknown. However, possibilities in dogs and certain breeds of cats include hyperlipidemia (high fat content in the blood). The history of many dogs with acute pancreatitis includes eating a fatty meal, leftovers of owners' food, or eating trash or garbage before the clinical signs developed. Other causes may include trauma, certain drugs or toxins, bacterial and viral infections, and immune diseases in which the body for some reason attacks its own tissues.

Dogs who are obese or have concurrent diseases may be at increased risk of developing pancreatitis. The disease in cats might be associated with concurrent diseases of the liver and intestinal tract.

### Diagnosis

Pancreatitis can be difficult to diagnose. Therefore, the dietary history you provide, including feeding fatty table scraps or allowing your pet access to garbage and spoiled food, is very helpful to your veterinarian. If your veterinarian suspects pancreatitis, he or she will perform a thorough physical examination, order blood tests and X-rays or an ultrasound of your pet's abdomen. Your veterinarian may need to obtain a biopsy of the pancreas as well.

### Treatment and Home Care

Your veterinarian will want to ensure that your pet is hydrated. Hospitalization is necessary while IV fluids are administered. It may also be necessary to withhold all food, water and medications taken by mouth for a limited time in order to let the pancreas rest and heal.

Your veterinarian may give your pet certain medications to help manage pancreatitis. These medications may include drugs to relieve abdominal pain, prevent vomiting, or antibiotics to treat or prevent pancreatic infections or abscesses.

Home care consists of giving all prescribed medications and special dietary products. You should carefully follow your veterinarian's advice regarding the feeding of foods that contribute to obesity and high blood-fat levels. Foods to avoid include table scraps, fatty meals and fat supplements.

### Nutritional Plan

If your pet has pancreatitis, your veterinarian may recommend a special food based on its age, body condition, clinical signs, level of fat in the blood and on the presence or absence of disease in other organs and body systems. Normal-weight, non-hyperlipidemic dogs with pancreatitis may benefit from foods that contain highly digestible ingredients and avoid excess fat. Such foods minimally stimulate the pancreas and include Hill's® Prescription Diet® i/d® Canine and i/d® Feline Gastrointestinal Health. Lower-fat foods include Hill's® Prescription Diet® w/d® Canine and w/d® Feline Low Fat-Diabetic-Gastrointestinal. Alternately, your veterinarian may recommend specially developed foods comprised of hydrolyzed proteins that minimize allergic reactions to foods. These types of foods may be especially beneficial for cats with pancreatitis. Such foods include Hill's® Prescription Diet® z/d® Canine and z/d® Feline Low Allergen. Under no circumstances should your pet be fed treats high in fat.

### Transitioning Food

Unless recommended otherwise by your veterinarian, gradually introduce any new food over a seven-day period. Mix the new food with your pet's former food, gradually increasing its proportion until only the new food is fed.

If your pet is one of the few that doesn't readily accept a new food, try warming the canned food to body temperature, hand feeding for the first few days, or mixing the dry food with warm water (wait ten minutes before serving). Feed only the recommended food. Be patient but firm with your pet. This is important because the success or failure of treatment depends to a large degree on strict adherence to the new food.

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## Home Care Instructions

Client's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Patient's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Medication(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Nutritional Recommendation: \_\_\_\_\_

Follow-Up Appointment: \_\_\_\_\_

(Hospital Stamp Area Above)

REGULAR VISITS WILL HELP OUR VETERINARY HEALTH CARE TEAM PROVIDE FOR YOUR PET'S BEST INTEREST.