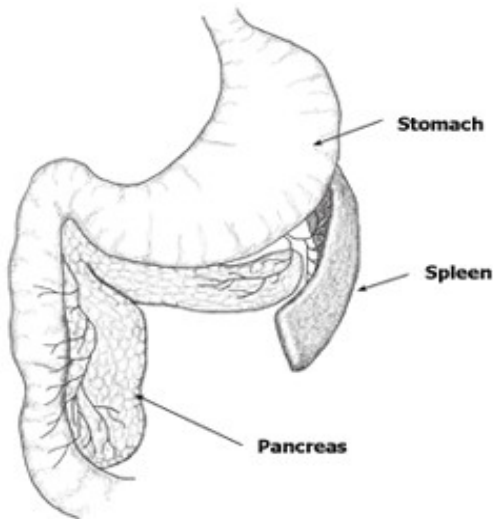


Chronic Pancreatitis in Dogs

Help prevent more trouble for your pooch!

Use this handout to learn more about management and prevention of chronic pancreatitis.

The pancreas has many functions, including the production and secretion of digestive enzymes and the production of insulin. Digestive enzymes are critical for the absorption of food. Insulin aids in the control of the metabolism and blood-sugar levels. Pancreatitis refers to “inflammation of the pancreas” and there are two types of this disease: chronic, which means “recurring,” and acute, which means “sudden.” When the pancreas becomes inflamed, digestive enzymes that are normally inactive until they reach the small intestine become activated in the pancreas instead, resulting in pain and swelling as the pancreas actually begins to digest itself. Dogs with chronic pancreatitis essentially have multiple attacks of acute pancreatitis. In some situations, the symptoms can be less severe but because the condition is chronic, the long-term impact can be more severe. The pancreas is located in the upper abdomen, near the stomach, liver, right kidney, and spleen.



Risks

There are many suggested causes of pancreatitis including obesity, high-fat diets, liver disease, certain medications, toxins, and infection. Even if your dog doesn't normally eat a high-fat diet, the introduction of a large amount of fatty food all at once can cause pancreatitis. Pancreatitis can occur in any dog but some breeds are more susceptible to this disease than others, including the miniature schnauzer, miniature poodle, and cocker spaniel. Additionally, pancreatitis is more common in older dogs, overweight dogs, and females. Dogs that get into garbage are much more likely to develop pancreatitis, so be sure to keep trash out of your dog's reach!

Symptoms

- Dogs will often stop eating and drinking
- Upset stomach and abdominal pain
- Swollen abdomen
- Abnormal posture; arching of the back
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Lethargy
- Fever
- Restlessness
- Gagging

If you have any questions, please call Cascade Vet Clinic at (250) 295-0312.

Your veterinary team is ready to help!

Diagnosis

Your veterinarian will take a complete history and perform a thorough physical exam of your pooch. Additionally, diagnostic tests will be required to identify if your pet has pancreatitis as other diseases have similar symptoms. These may include:

- Chemistry tests to evaluate kidney, liver, and pancreatic disease and dysfunction, as well as sugar levels
- A complete blood count to screen your dog for infection, inflammation, or anemia and other blood-related conditions
- Electrolyte tests to ensure your dog isn't dehydrated or suffering from an electrolyte imbalance
- Pancreas-specific tests to help diagnose or rule out the disease
- X-rays of the abdomen and intestinal tract
- Ultrasound to image the pancreas and other abdominal organs
- Endoscopy to evaluate the lining of the gastrointestinal tract

Treatment

The treatment of pancreatitis depends on the severity of the disease and may include:

- Hospitalization at the veterinary clinic
- Fluid therapy and electrolytes
- Strict adherence to a prescription low fat gastrointestinal diet
- Pain medicine
- Antivomiting medication (antiemetics)
- Antibiotics, if a secondary bacterial infection is suspected
- Other medications, depending on your dog's symptoms

Keep in mind that your veterinarian may recommend that some diagnostic tests—such as the CBC, chemistry tests, and pancreas-specific tests—be repeated to monitor your dog's progress during treatment.

Your veterinarian will recommend a treatment plan that is specific for your pet. Make sure you give all medications as directed and carefully follow any dietary recommendations. Keep a close eye on your best friend; if they become lethargic or stop eating, call your veterinarian right away.

Prevention

While you can't completely prevent pancreatitis, the following will help reduce the risk of your dog developing this disease and will help ensure her health and well-being:

- Follow all nutritional recommendations.
- Feed your dog a prescription diet recommended for the prevention of pancreatitis.
- Don't let your dog become overweight—weight management is just as important for our four-legged friends as it is for us!
- Never feed high-fat diets.
- Avoid giving your dog table scraps, especially if it isn't accustomed to eating people food.
- Make sure you discuss all medications for your dog with your veterinarian. They will help you avoid any unnecessary medications that may cause pancreatitis.
- Don't let your dog have access to garbage!