

# Pancreatitis



## What is pancreatitis and what are the symptoms?

Pancreatitis is an inflammatory disease of the pancreas that occurs in dogs and cats. The disease can have a sudden onset or be a chronic condition which can be mild to severe in nature. Most cases of pancreatitis are considered idiopathic, or without a known cause. An inappropriate diet that is high in fat or dietary indiscretion is the most common risk factor for dogs. Viral or bacterial infections and certain drugs and toxins have also been implicated as causes of pancreatitis. Certain dog breeds, like the Schnauzer, are predisposed to pancreatitis. Common symptoms of pancreatitis include:

- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Abdominal pain
- Lethargy
- Anorexia
- Depression
- Dehydration

Symptoms can also appear as non-specific changes in your pet's behaviors or attitudes.

## How will the doctor know if my pet has pancreatitis?

A complete physical examination will need to be performed. Clinical symptoms are similar to other intestinal disorders so diagnostic tests are important in determining the cause of your pet's illness. Common tests include blood work, urinalysis, radiographs or ultrasound. There is a specific test available at Banfield hospitals, called the SNAP cPL, which is very sensitive and valuable in making the final diagnosis of pancreatitis in dogs and cats. Providing the doctor with a recent dietary history can also assist the doctor in diagnosing your pet.

## How will the doctor treat my pet for pancreatitis?

Pets commonly need to be hospitalized when being treated for pancreatitis. Intravenous fluids with electrolytes are given to correct dehydration and replace fluids lost through vomiting, diarrhea and anorexia. Antibiotics may be given to help prevent serious bacterial infections resulting from injury to the intestinal tract or liver. Medications are often given to control vomiting, intestinal spasms and pain. In severe cases, plasma or blood transfusions are necessary. Your pet will be sent home on a diet specially formulated for easy digestion that will aid in the prevention of further episodes of pancreatitis. If your pet was taking medication that provoked pancreatitis, your doctor will need to select a different medication or design a plan aimed to hopefully reduce further episodes if another medication is not available for your pet's condition.

## Can pancreatitis be prevented?

Pancreatitis triggered by dietary food indiscretion can be prevented. Limiting access to non-pet food items such as human food and other high fat foods will decrease the possibility of pets getting pancreatitis. If you are unsure if your pet's current diet plan is appropriate, ask your pet's doctor for advice. As always, if you have any questions or concerns about the health of your pet, please contact your Banfield doctor.

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For additional information, please contact your Banfield medical team.

