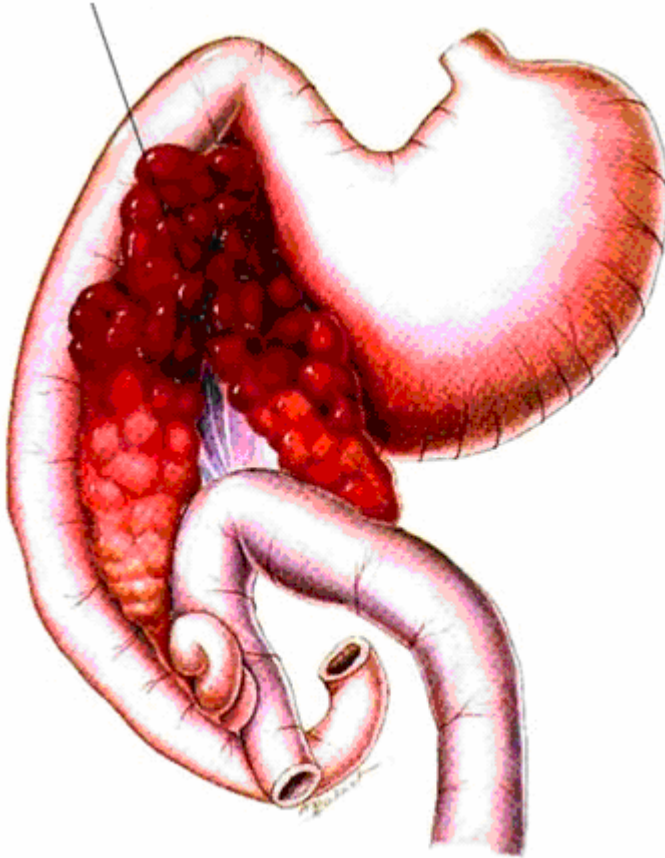




# Acute Pancreatitis

Swollen, inflamed pancreas  
with areas of hemorrhage



## Acute Pancreatitis

### Diagnostic Plan

History  
Physical examination  
Blood work  
Urinalysis  
Abdominal x-rays

### Therapeutic Plan

Fluid therapy  
No oral medication or food  
Antibacterials  
Drugs to suppress vomiting

### Nutritional Plan

When resuming enteral nutrition, small portions of a food low in fat and residue  
After the initial episode, manage hyperlipidemia, if necessary

## Acute Pancreatitis

Your pet has acute pancreatitis. Acute pancreatitis is a serious, sometimes life-threatening inflammation of the pancreas. Common clinical signs include abdominal pain, vomiting, and diarrhea. Acute pancreatitis is treated with fluid therapy, special foods that decrease the workload of the pancreas, and medications. This client education sheet will help you learn more about acute 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 Acute 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. Acute pancreatitis results when the enzymes produced by the pancreas to digest food begin to digest the pancreas itself. Acute pancreatitis can occur in cats, but it appears to be most common in middle-aged female dogs that are overweight.

### Causes

Several factors contribute to the sequence of events in which the pancreas begins to digest itself. Hyperlipidemia (high fat content in the blood) can cause pancreatitis. In fact, the history of many patients with acute pancreatitis includes eating a fatty meal before the clinical signs developed. Other contributing factors may include obesity, bacterial and viral infections, trauma, certain drugs, kidney failure, and immune diseases in which the body for some reason attacks its own tissues.

## Diagnosis

Many cases of acute pancreatitis are very 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 acute 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 in order to reduce the pancreas' workload.

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 acute pancreatitis, your veterinarian may recommend a special food based on its age and body condition, clinical signs, blood fat content, and on the presence or absence of disease in other organs and body systems. Normal weight, non-hyperlipidemic dogs with acute pancreatitis may benefit from foods that contain highly digestible ingredients and a low level of fat. Such foods minimally stimulate the pancreas and include Hill's® Prescription Diet® Canine or Feline i/d®. Lower fat foods include Hill's® Prescription Diet® Canine and Feline w/d®. Your veterinarian may want to put your pet on a weight reduction program. Foods such as Hill's® Prescription Diet® Canine and Feline r/d® can provide the low fat, low calorie nutrition necessary to achieve weight loss. Under no circumstances should your pet be fed treats that are 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). However, do not add water to your cat's food. 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.