



## Chronic Colitis

### Diagnostic Plan

History  
Physical examination  
Stool analysis  
Abdominal and rectal palpation  
Fecal exams and stool culture  
Blood work  
Urinalysis  
X-rays of the colon  
Colonoscopy and biopsy

### Therapeutic Plan

Antibacterials  
Dewormers  
Anti-inflammatory drugs

### Nutritional Plan

High fiber foods may benefit some pets with colitis. In other pets low residue foods may work better. For a food-allergy-induced colitis a hypoallergenic food is indicated.

## Chronic Colitis

Your pet has chronic colitis. Colitis is an inflammation of the large intestine (colon) that disrupts your pet's normal bowel habits. Signs of chronic colitis include continuous or intermittent diarrhea, mucus and blood in the stool, and straining to have a bowel movement. Few cases of colitis can be cured, but many can be managed effectively with medications and special foods. This client information sheet will help you learn more about chronic colitis 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 Chronic Colitis

### Causes

In many cases of chronic colitis in pets and people, the cause is idiopathic, which means it is unknown. In some cases, the animal's immune system may be directing an inflammatory response against its own tissues. Other potential causes of colitis in dogs and cats include: parasites; fungal, bacterial and viral agents; allergies to food; foreign bodies; and stress. Tumors and polyps in the colon can also cause colitis.

### Diagnosis

If your veterinarian suspects that your pet has colitis, he or she will perform a thorough physical exam including rectal and abdominal palpation (examination by touching). Other diagnostic tests may include a thorough examination of several stool samples, including stool cultures for parasites, bacteria and other organisms. In addition, your veterinarian may perform other tests including: blood tests; urinalyses; X-rays of the digestive tract (possibly using special dyes such as barium); colonoscopy (examination of the colon through a small lighted tube inserted through the anus); biopsy of the colon; and surgical exploration of the abdomen.

## Treatment and Home Care

Some causes of colitis can be cured, but many pets have the condition for the rest of their life. Most cases, however, can be managed with medication and special foods. When a specific cause is diagnosed, your veterinarian will attempt to eliminate it. An example is using dewormers for whipworm infections.

Your veterinarian may recommend medications to help with the diarrhea and inflammation. Antibiotics are frequently prescribed because colitis can alter the normal population of bacteria in the digestive tract.

You should follow your veterinarian's instructions carefully when you take your pet home. You should also monitor your pet's condition, call your veterinarian if you have any concerns and return to the hospital for scheduled follow-up appointments and diagnostic studies.

## Nutritional Plan

If your pet has had chronic colitis, your veterinarian may recommend a special food. Pets with chronic colitis caused by food intolerance or food allergies may respond to a food that contains ingredients they have never eaten before, such as Hill's® Prescription Diet® d/d® Canine and d/d® Feline Skin Support. Alternately, your veterinarian may recommend specially developed foods comprised of hydrolyzed proteins that minimize immunologic reactions to foods. Such foods include Hill's® Prescription Diet® z/d® Canine and z/d® Feline Low Allergen.

Other cases of colitis may respond to a food that contains increased amounts of fiber. Such foods include Hill's® Prescription Diet® r/d® Canine and r/d® Feline Weight Loss-Low Calorie as well as Hill's® Prescription Diet® w/d® Canine and w/d® Feline Low Fat-Diabetic-Gastrointestinal. Pets not responding to a hypoallergenic or an increased fiber food may respond to a highly digestible, low-fiber food such as Hill's® Prescription Diet® i/d® Canine and i/d® Feline Gastrointestinal Health.

Unfortunately, it usually isn't possible to predict which of these dietary approaches may be best for your pet. A trial with one of these special therapeutic products usually takes three to six weeks before your veterinarian will be able to accurately assess the results. It is critical to follow your veterinarian's directions. Do not feed any other foods or treats during the trial, unless approved by your veterinarian.

## 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.

---

*Presented as an educational service by*

---



## 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.