



## Pyometra

### Diagnostic Plan

History  
Physical examination  
Vaginal cytologic study  
Abdominal palpation  
Rectal palpation  
Blood work  
Urinalysis  
Urine culture  
Abdominal X-rays

### Therapeutic Plan

Fluid therapy  
Surgery  
Antibacterials  
Prostaglandins

### Nutritional Plan

Nutrition based on individual patient evaluation including body condition and other organ system involvement  
Postsurgically, nutrition adequate for tissue repair

## Pyometra

Your pet has a pyometra. Pyometra is an accumulation of pus in the uterus. It is a serious, potentially fatal infection commonly seen in older unspayed dogs and less frequently in cats. Common clinical signs include excessive water consumption and urination, depression and appetite loss. This client education sheet will help you learn more about pyometra 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 Pyometra

Pyometra usually occurs several weeks after a heat cycle. The infection begins as an abnormal increase in the number of glands in the uterus. The secretions of these glands provide an excellent environment for bacteria that enter the uterus from the vagina. Once the uterus is infected, it can become filled with purulent material and progress to become a life-threatening condition.

### Causes

Most cases of pyometra develop spontaneously from the combined effects of estrogen and progesterone – hormones produced by an animal's ovaries – on the lining of uterus. These hormones stimulate an increase in the number of glands in the uterus. Injections of estrogen to prevent pregnancy have also been shown to cause pyometra. Also, progesterone used in therapy to treat other disorders may cause pyometra.

### Diagnosis

Physical examination by your veterinarian often reveals an enlarged abdomen with or without a vaginal discharge. A swab of material from the vagina may contain white blood cells and bacteria when it is examined under a microscope. Blood tests, urinalysis, X-rays of the abdomen and ultrasound all provide useful information to help your veterinarian confirm the diagnosis.

## Treatment and Home Care

Surgical removal of the ovaries and uterus (ovariohysterectomy) is the recommended treatment. Supportive therapy before, during and after surgery is critical. Most patients with pyometra are very ill and require fluid therapy to help support kidney function. Antibiotics are given as well.

Antibiotics and drugs called prostaglandins are sometimes used to treat mildly affected dogs whose owners want to use them for breeding. This therapy is not recommended for most animals because of the potential severity of pyometra and because pyometra may recur in medically treated animals.

Home care consists of giving medications as prescribed and monitoring your pet's appetite and water consumption. If your pet is depressed and refuses to eat, call your veterinarian. Excessive water consumption and urination should gradually decrease to normal.

Check your pet's incision at least once a day. If the incision is red and swollen, oozes blood, or begins to separate, call your veterinarian. Exercise should be limited to leash-walking for the first week after surgery. You may need to return to your veterinarian's office for suture removal and lab rechecks.

## Nutritional Plan

Pyometra usually occurs in older animals and causes severe illness and impaired liver and kidney function. Even though your pet may recover from pyometra in a week or two, the lesions in the kidneys may take months to heal. Because of this, your veterinarian may give you special feeding instructions. Patients with renal failure often benefit from foods with reduced amounts of phosphorus, sodium and protein. These special foods help prevent an accumulation of waste materials in the blood and will reduce the workload on the kidneys.

Foods such as Hill's® Prescription Diet® k/d® Canine and k/d® Feline Renal Health are formulated by veterinary nutritionists to reduce the demands on impaired kidneys. These foods contain high-quality protein, but in smaller amounts than in most pet foods, so the kidneys have less waste materials to eliminate. Because excess phosphorus can contribute to kidney disease, phosphorus is also reduced in these foods. Also, the reduced dietary sodium in these foods has been shown to maintain normal blood pressure. High blood pressure frequently occurs with kidney failure.

## 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.