



勝利動物醫院  
Victory Animal Hospital

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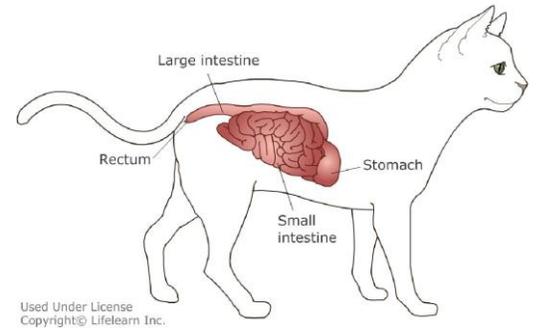
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## Inflammatory Bowel Disease in Cats

### What is inflammatory bowel disease?

Inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) is a syndrome rather than a disease. The syndrome is caused by a specific reaction to chronic irritation of the stomach or intestines. Inflammation is the body's response to an insult, injury or foreign substance. With inflammatory bowel disease, specific types of inflammatory cells, depending on the type of IBD, invade the wall of the stomach and/or intestines.

"With chronic or long-term inflammation, normal tissue may be replaced by fibrous (scar-like) tissue."



### What are the clinical signs of IBD?

"IBD can involve any part of the gastrointestinal tract..."

IBD can involve any part of the gastrointestinal tract, but most commonly affects the stomach and/or the intestines. If the stomach is involved, your pet will experience chronic vomiting. This is the most common clinical sign of IBD. If the intestines are involved, chronic diarrhea will occur. In some animals, both parts of the digestive tract are involved so both vomiting and diarrhea occur. If the syndrome lasts for more than a few months, weight loss and poor appetite are common.

### When is IBD most likely to occur?

IBD is most commonly diagnosed in middle-aged to older animals, usually 5–12 years of age.

### How is IBD diagnosed?

The chronic irritation that causes IBD stimulates the body to send cells from the immune system to the area. The most commonly found cells are lymphocytes and plasmacytes. Occasionally, eosinophils and neutrophils will be found. Thus, IBD is diagnosed when these cells are identified in abnormal levels in the tissue.

"The specific type of IBD is definitively diagnosed based on tissue biopsies."



## Is that all that is required for diagnosis?

The tissue reaction that occurs in the stomach, small intestine, or colon is diagnosed with biopsy.

"Determining what is causing the tissue reaction to occur usually requires further testing."

However, determining what is causing the tissue reaction to occur usually requires further testing. Tests or treatments will be performed to rule out stomach and intestinal parasites, cancer, and infections. Blood tests to rule out problems with the kidneys, liver, and pancreas, as well as diseases such as hyperthyroidism and diabetes, are performed. In some cases, the exact cause cannot be determined.

## How is IBD treated?

The ideal way to treat this problem is to diagnose the underlying disease that is causing the reaction. If an exact cause cannot be found, the disease is called *idiopathic*.

Depending on the results and on which part of the bowel appears to be involved, special diets may be used as a therapeutic trial. These diets include hypoallergenic foods, low residue diet or high fiber diets. In some cases, it may take eight to twelve weeks for a positive response to be seen. Medication may or may not be given initially, depending on the particular case. If it appears from the blood tests that bacterial overgrowth is present, antibiotics may be prescribed. Anti-inflammatory drugs are used to control the clinical signs in many patients, but are used with caution since their potential for damaging side-effects can be significant.

Since not all pets respond to the same medication or food, a series of drugs and/or foods maybe necessary.

## Are other anti-inflammatory drugs used to treat IBD?

Prednisolone and the related drug prednisone are the most effective anti-inflammatory drugs with the least side effects. However, they are not effective in all animals. Sometimes a stronger drug is used initially to gain control of the disease.

## Could stomach infections be a cause of IBD?

Some bacteria can cause chronic vomiting in animals. The most common of these bacteria is *Helicobacter*.

## What is the prognosis?

If a positive response occurs to a diet change, the animal can be maintained on the new diet for the rest of its life, provided the diet is appropriately balanced. If it responds to medication for stomach bacteria, a good prognosis is justified. If response occurs to corticosteroids, the long-term prognosis is also good if administration of the drug is feasible. However, if there is no response to diet or corticosteroids, the prognosis is more guarded. In these cases, further testing is suggested to see if an underlying disease can be identified.

*This client information sheet is based on material written by: Ernest Ward, DVM*

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