



Chronic Colitis

Diagnostic Plan

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

Therapeutic Plan

Antibacterials
Dewormers
Anti-inflammatory drugs

Nutritional Plan

High fiber nutrition to benefit some cases of colitis if high fiber foods are ineffective, a dietary trial using a low residue food is indicated
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's unknown. In some cases, the animal's immune system may be directing an inflammatory response against its own tissues. Some of the more common causes of colitis in dogs and cats include whipworms, invasion of the layers of the colon by cancerous or inflammatory cells, fungal, bacterial, and plantlike (algae) organisms, allergies to food, foreign bodies, stress, and polyps or tumors.

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 necessary diagnostic tests may include a thorough examination of several stool samples for parasites, cells, and other abnormalities, blood tests, urinalyses, a culture of feces for bacteria, x-rays of the digestive tract (possibly with 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 more cases persist for the life of the pet. Most cases, however, can be managed very well with medication and foods that allow lesions in the colon to heal and that normalize intestinal transit time. When a specific cause is diagnosed, your veterinarian will attempt to eliminate it. An example is using dewormers for whipworm infections.

Your veterinarian may prescribe tranquilizers and antispasmodics for relief of colitis due to stress. Other drugs relieve diarrhea and inflammation. Antibiotics are frequently prescribed because colitis alters the normal population of bacteria in the digestive tract.

Many of the medications used to treat chronic colitis are very potent and may have side effects. You should follow your veterinarian's instructions carefully when you take your pet home. You should also watch for the side effects described by your veterinarian 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 give you special feeding instructions. Patients with chronic colitis caused by food intolerance or food allergies may respond to a food that contains ingredients they've never eaten before, such as Hill's® Prescription Diet® Canine and Feline d/d®. Alternately, your veterinarian may recommend specially developed foods comprised of hydrolyzed proteins that eliminate adverse reactions to foods. Such foods include Hill's® Prescription Diet® Canine and Feline® z/d®.

Other cases of colitis may respond to a well-balanced food that contains increased amounts of fiber. Such foods include Hill's® Prescription Diet® Canine and Feline r/d®, as well as Canine and Feline w/d®. Patients not responding to a hypoallergenic or an increased fiber food may respond to a low-residue, low-fiber food. These special foods are highly digestible and present less undigested material in the colon, which may reduce irritation. Such foods include Hill's® Prescription Diet® Canine and Feline i/d®.

Unfortunately it is usually not 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.

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 prescribed diet. Do not feed additional salt or any snacks that may contain sodium. 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.