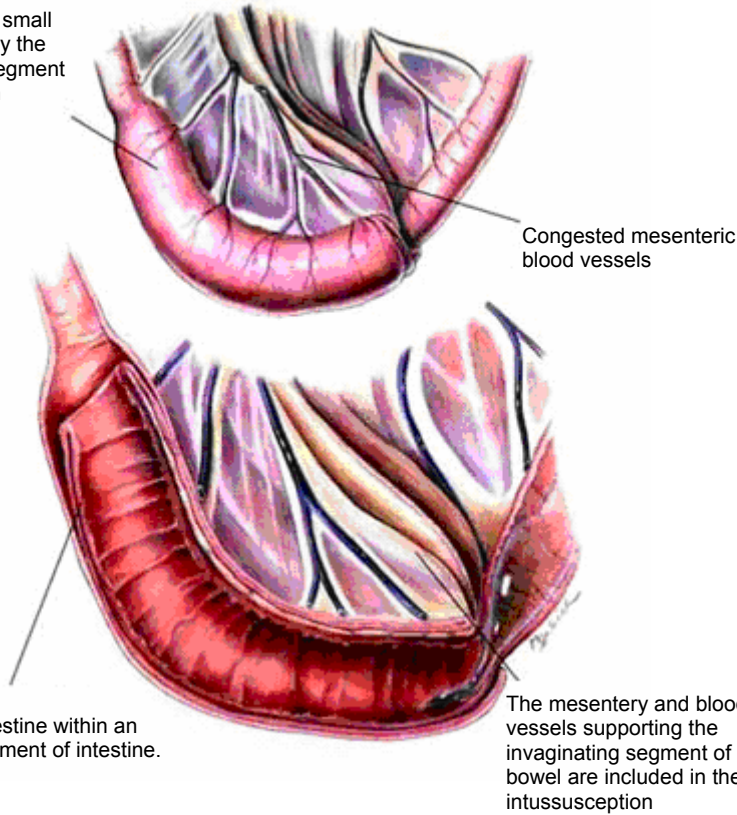


Obstruction of the small intestine caused by the telescoping of a segment of intestine into an adjacent segment



## **Intussusception**

### **Diagnostic Plan**

History  
Physical examination  
Abdominal palpation  
Abdominal x-rays

### **Therapeutic Plan**

Fluid therapy  
Surgery  
Removal of the cause  
Nothing by mouth

### **Nutritional Plan**

Postsurgically, low-residue nutrition fed in small portions  
Consider overall patient condition when determining the protein level and caloric density of the food.

## **Intussusception**

Your pet has an intussusception. Intussusception is the prolapse of one segment of intestine into an adjoining segment (like a telescope). This prolapse causes partial or complete intestinal obstruction. Clinical signs include vomiting, diarrhea, and abdominal pain. To treat intussusception, veterinarians surgically explore the abdomen to reposition or remove the affected segment of intestine. This client education sheet will help you learn more about intussusception 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 Intussusception**

Intestinal obstructions caused by intussusceptions lead to loss of fluids and electrolytes into the intestine. Severe damage to blood vessels of the intestine can result in death of the intestinal wall and leakage of bacteria and intestinal contents into the abdomen and blood stream. This development may lead to shock and death. Intussusceptions are most common in puppies and kittens, but may occur in older pets.

#### **Causes**

Any condition that produces excessive movement of the bowel can cause an intussusception. Intestinal infections, parasites, and tumors can cause an intussusception.

#### **Diagnosis**

Many times your veterinarian will palpate (examine by touching) a cylindrical mass in the abdomen as he or she performs a physical exam. This finding suggests the presence of an intussusception. X-rays, including special x-rays using barium, and colonoscopy (an examination of the colon using a small lighted tube inserted through the anus) are also helpful. Your veterinarian may perform blood tests and urinalyses to determine your pet's hydration status and to check for abnormalities in electrolyte, metabolic, and acid-base balance.

## Treatment and Home Care

Dehydration and electrolyte, metabolic, and acid-base imbalances are treated by your veterinarian with intravenous fluids. Antibiotics are often necessary as well. Once your pet's condition is stable, your veterinarian will anesthetize your pet and explore its abdomen to correct the intussusception. If the intussusception developed recently, the blood supply to the intestine may be intact, and the intestine may be healthy. In these cases, none of the intestine is usually removed. If the intestine is unhealthy, your veterinarian may need to remove the damaged section and reattach the ends of the intestine on either side of the intussusception.

If the cause of the intussusception is found, your veterinarian will treat it to reduce the excessive movement of the intestine. For example, intestinal parasites are treated with dewormers.

Home care consists of giving all prescribed medications and checking your pet's incision daily for swelling and discharges. You should report any abnormalities such as loss of appetite, depression, and changes in the incision line to your veterinarian at once. Skin sutures will need to be removed according to your veterinarian's instructions.

## Nutritional Plan

If your pet has had surgery to correct an intussusception, your veterinarian may give you special feeding instructions. Patients that have had intestinal surgery may benefit from foods that are highly digestible during the recovery process. Such foods minimize the need for complex digestive processes and are less irritating to the intestinal tract. Foods with these nutritional characteristics include Hill's® Prescription Diet® Canine i/d® and Feline i/d®.

After your pet's recovery is complete, your veterinarian may suggest another dietary change. Nutrition is especially important for maximum growth and proper development of the immune system in younger pets. Optimal nutrition should also reduce the health risks associated with feeding excess levels of nutrients such as calcium and phosphorus, which could cause skeletal problems, and excess calories, which could cause obesity. Foods formulated for optimal growth that avoid excess levels of harmful nutrients include Hill's® Science Diet® Puppy and Kitten for growing pets and Science Diet® Adult dogs and cats one to six years of age.

## 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.