



Southern Counties

VETERINARY
SPECIALISTS

Pancreatitis in dogs and cats

Information Sheet

**Southern Counties Veterinary Specialists
Specialist Referral Service**

What is pancreatitis?

Pancreatitis is an inflammation of the pancreas. The pancreas is a gland located next to the stomach producing several substances including enzymes helping digestion and insulin.

Why does pancreatitis occur?

This is a very common condition of dogs and cats. The exact reason of the inflammation most of the time is unknown.

Some drugs (anti-seizures) and diseases (diabetes mellitus, inflammatory bowel disease) increase the risk of pancreatitis. Some canine breeds (Cocker Spaniel, Miniature Schnauzer) have higher risk of pancreatitis.

What are the clinical signs of pancreatitis?

The typical signs are vomiting, anorexia and abdominal pain.

A high number of dogs and cats have pancreatitis, but not all of them have clinical signs and they are not unwell.

How is pancreatitis investigated by the veterinary surgeon?

The diagnosis of pancreatitis is usually reached by a combination of clinical signs, specific blood tests and exclusion of other diseases that cause the same clinical signs. For example abdominal ultrasound is very useful to rule out the presence of intestinal foreign body that can cause vomiting (and mimic pancreatitis).

What treatment options are available?

The treatment of pancreatitis is most of the time medical. Patients need intravenous fluid, pain management and anti-sickness medications. Some patients need intensive treatment over several days.

What is the prognosis of my pet?

A good number of patients can be treated successfully with medical treatment. Few patients unfortunately may develop life-threatening complications such as bleeding tendencies.

Some patients recover from the acute phase of the inflammation but may develop chronic but frequently asymptomatic pancreatitis.





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