



Inflammatory Bowel Disease in Dogs

Inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) is a common medical problem of dogs. It is not a specific disease; rather, the term IBD represents several different conditions that cause inflammation of the intestines (bowel). IBD is an autoimmune disease which means that the immune system is attacking the body. It may involve only the small intestine, large intestine, or stomach; in some cases, all parts of the gastrointestinal tract are affected. It results in recurrent or chronic vomiting, chronic or recurring diarrhea, or both. Weight loss and loss of appetite are also common.

Treatment:

Each case of IBD is unique; therefore your pet will be given a specific treatment plan depending on their medical history and symptoms. The treatment plan may include immune suppressant drugs, supportive medications, and/or a prescription diet. It is common for the treatment plan to change over time depending in how your pet responds.

Prescription Diets:

Your pet may be prescribed a hypoallergenic or novel protein diet. It is best to transition over to the new diet slowly over a couple of weeks. This is done by increasing the amount of new food while decreasing the amount of the old food a little each day until the transition is complete. Once your pet is fully transitioned over to the new diet, it is VERY important that they do not eat any other dog food, human food, or treats unless approved by your veterinarian.

Supportive Medications:

Supportive medications are used to help treat the various symptoms of IBD such as; nausea, diarrhea, and lack of appetite. Your dog may be prescribed some or all of these medications depending on their symptoms. These medications can be used long term or just as needed for flare-ups. They can be given together or separately.

Anti-nausea Medications: Cerenia, Ondansetron (Zofran), Metoclopramide (Reglan)

- Used to treat and help prevent nausea and vomiting
- May help improve appetite
- Come in various forms. For example, Reglan is available in a syrup and a tablet
- Can be given orally or by injection
- Can be given with or without food
- Can be given together or separately

Anti-diarrheal Medications: Metronidazole (Flagyl)

- Use to treat diarrhea or soft stool
- Can be given with or without food
- Can be given along with anti-nausea medication(s)

How to use Supportive Medications:

Flare-ups are common in dogs with IBD. A flare-up can happen because of stress, dietary discretions, or just from the disease itself. During a flare-up, your pet may experience nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, lack of appetite, or lethargy. They may experience some or all of these symptoms ranging from mild to severe. You can often manage mild flare-ups at home. The goal is to treat each symptom with the appropriate supportive medication. Below is a general guide:

- If your pet vomits or does not want to eat: Give the anti-nausea medication(s) at least an hour before offering food. At that point offer a very small amount of food. If they eat and do not vomit, you can try offering another small meal about two hours later. The goal is to feed smaller, more frequent meals instead of one or two larger meals. If your pet does not want to eat right away, simply take the food away and try again in a couple of hours.
- If your pet has soft stool or diarrhea: Give Metronidazole (Flagyl) as instructed on the pill bottle. It may take a couple of doses before you see an improvement in your pet's stool.

****If your pet continues to vomit, not eat, or have diarrhea after trying supportive medications at home, or if your pet is unable to hold down food or water, please call our office right away.*

Severe flare-ups may require an office visit with us or your regular veterinarian. Your pet may be given fluids under the skin to help with dehydrations and injections of anti-nausea medications to help with nausea/vomiting. In some cases your pet may need to stay in the hospital for intravenous fluid therapy and supportive medications.

Key Points:

- Your pet will most likely require life-long treatment for this disease.
- Flare-ups are common and can often be controlled with medications.
- Be Patient during the various food and medication trials that are sometimes necessary to get the disease under control.
- Our goal with treatment is to get your pet feeling as normal as possible with the lowest effective dose of medication.
- Your pet's treatment may change over time, We may increase or decrease doses of certain medications, add or discontinue medications, or try different diets.
- Regular check-ups with Dr. Seaman-Kilcullen or Dr. Pollack are extremely important.

Being the parent of a dog with IBD can be overwhelming and challenging at times. We are here for you! Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions or concerns, however silly they may seem. Our goal is to guide you so that your pet is as happy and healthy as possible.

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