



PANCREATITIS

Pancreatitis is inflammation of the pancreas, an organ which sits at the front of the abdomen next to the stomach and small intestine. It has 2 functions; it produces hormones, for example insulin to control blood glucose and also it produces enzymes to help break down food.

Dogs – Pancreatitis is very common, especially in small breed dogs with Cocker spaniels and Cavalier King Charles Spaniels most commonly affected although large breed dogs can also have pancreatitis. German Shepherds have a separate condition where the pancreas is unable to produce any enzymes and this is called exocrine pancreatic insufficiency.

Cats - In cats pancreatitis usually occurs alongside inflammation of the liver and the intestines and this is called triaditis.

Clinical signs:

Chronic –

- Picky appetite
- Occasionally bringing up bile/sickness
- Pale greasy faeces
- Moving to and from the food bowl and eating slowly
- Discomfort after eating

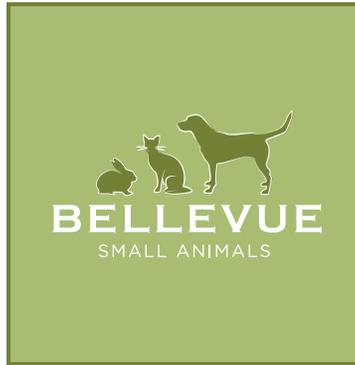
Acute –

Usually this is an acute on chronic episode where there have been subtle signs of chronic pancreatitis for a long time, which were viewed as normal by the owner but then suddenly the animal can become very ill. Or it can follow consumption of something unusual or high in fat.

- Not wanting to eat or drink
- Vomiting
- Stretching out their stomach, looking like they are praying
- Whimpering in pain/crying out
- Pale greasy faeces/diarrhoea
- Very lethargic
- Shaking

Diagnosis:

The diagnosis of pancreatitis is very difficult to make as no test is 100% effective. A routine blood sample will point us in the direction of pancreatitis and if we are suspicious then this will be followed up with a Pancreas specific blood sample. If high this indicates pancreatitis but in some cases it will be normal. We will use these results to rule out other causes of inappetance and vomiting and sometimes we will also recommend an abdominal ultrasound scan to assess the pancreas and abdomen.



TREATMENT

Dogs:

Acute – In cases of acute pancreatitis your pet is normally very unwell. They don't want to eat or drink, will often be very sick and will be very uncomfortable. They usually therefore need to be admitted to the clinic for intravenous fluids to maintain their electrolyte balance and hydration status and we will also administer pain relief, anti-sickness medications and sometimes antibiotics. In severe cases this can be fatal.

Chronic – chronic patients with more intermittent and mild signs as listed above can usually be managed if on the correct diet. The pancreas struggles to digest fatty food so they need to be kept constantly on a low fat diet. Once they have had a bout of pancreatitis they are prone to flare ups in the future. The best diet is the Royal Canin Low fat GI kibble or tinned food which contains 1.7% fat. It may take a while for your dog to be interested in the food but it is worth persevering. If your dog refuses or if it's too expensive then the raw diet Natures Menu would be very appropriate due to its low fat content and high quality wheat free ingredients. The suitable options for you in this range are the senior complete nuggets at 5% fat, the country hunter rabbit and cranberry nuggets at 6% fat, or the adult complete nuggets at 6% fat. The adult complete tins are 6% fat (apart from the beef) and the country hunter rabbit tins are 5% fat and are both therefore suitable.

If there is a particular diet you wish to feed or try then please feel free to call us and we can discuss whether this would be suitable. Sometimes these chronic cases can also benefit from antacids to soothe the stomach and counteract the lack of bicarbonate produced from the pancreas.

Cats:

Acute – Treatment is similar with cats as for dogs, however as their liver and intestines are sometimes involved there is often a greater need for antibiotics. In addition whereas dogs can go for days without eating and their appetite tends to return quicker, if a cat doesn't eat for more than 3 days they can become seriously ill. There is therefore more often a need for us to use appetite stimulants or use a feeding tube.

Chronic – Cats are much fussier eaters than dogs so getting them to eat a low fat diet can be tricky. They tend to really enjoy Natures Menu although sometime you have to heat it up in the oven slightly as they don't like eating cold food! The options we would recommend from the Natures Menu range are Chicken and duck or Chicken and rabbit.

Long term concerns: Repeated bouts of pancreatitis can lead to exocrine pancreatic insufficiency and diabetes in later life therefore it's important to pick up on the signs early and institute correct management. Please call us if you have any concerns.

If your pet has chronic pancreatitis you are entitled to a free check up every 3 months with the nurse to keep an eye on your pet's weight and diet etc