



COLITIS & PROCTITIS

What is Colitis?

Colitis is inflammation of the colon. Proctitis is inflammation of the rectum. Inflammation of the colon causes accumulation of inflammatory cellular by-products, disrupts the lining epithelial cells, stimulates colonic secretion, stimulates secretion of mucus, and disrupts motility. These mechanisms reduce the ability of the colon to absorb water and store feces. This causes diarrhea, often with mucus and red blood in it. There is a breed predisposition to histiocytic ulcerative colitis in young boxers, otherwise colitis can occur in any cat or dog.

How Common is Colitis?

Approximately 30% of dogs with chronic diarrhea examined at the University of Florida Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital had colitis.

What are the Symptoms of Colitis?

It can occur at any age, but affected boxers usually show symptoms by age 2. Symptoms may include chronic diarrhea often with mucus or blood. Feces (stool) may vary from semiformal to liquid and often there is a high frequency of defecation with small volume of feces each time. Prolonged straining after defecation may be seen. Some dogs will vomit too.

What Causes Colitis?

Causes can vary from pet to pet, but some possible causes include:

- Infectious: Whipworms, hookworms, several one-celled parasites like Giardia, bacteria like Salmonella, Clostridium, Campylobacter, Yersinia, Escherichia, and various fungi.
- Traumatic: Foreign body and abrasive material
- Allergic: Dietary protein and possibly bacterial protein
- Polyps and other benign tumors
- Cecum inversion and intussusception
- Inflammatory: several forms
- Cancer: Lymphosarcoma and adenocarcinoma
- Irritable bowel syndrome

How is It Diagnosed?

Blood tests may be indicated. Fecal examinations are often performed, including cellular examinations, tests for parasites and bacterial cultures. X-rays (radiographs) may be indicated. Colonoscopy and biopsy is often diagnostic.

How is Colitis Treated?

DIET

- Acute colitis can be helped by fasting for 24-48 hours.
- A nonallergenic diet can be helpful in patients with inflammatory colitis; using a commercial or home prepared diet that contains a protein to which the pet has not been exposed (Prescription Diet D/d or Z/d).
- Fiber supplementation with a poorly fermented fiber (e.g., bran and cellulose) is recommended to increase fecal bulk, improve colonic muscle's contractility, and bind fecal water to produce formed feces. Some fermentable fiber (e.g., psyllium) may be beneficial to aid healing.

MEDICINE

Treatments may include intravenous fluid therapy if the pet is dehydrated. If a specific cause of the colitis is determined, the treatment will be directed at that particular cause: antibiotics, antiparasitics, or antifungal agents may be needed.

Anti-inflammatory or immune suppressive drugs may be indicated for some types of colitis. Motility modifying drugs (antispasmodics) may give some temporary relief.

What is the Prognosis?

- Treatment may be intermittent and long-term in patients with inflammatory colitis with repeated recurrence, especially in those pets with the histiocytic and granulomatous forms.
- Granulomatous, histiocytic, fungal, protothecal colitis, and lymphosarcoma of the colon respond poorly to medical treatment; surgery may indicated.
- Inflammatory—prognosis in patients with lymphoplasmacytic and eosinophilic disease is good with treatment; prognosis is poor in patients with granulomatous and histiocytic disease in the short term and worsens with recurrence or poor response to treatment.
- Cancer—prognosis fair to good in patients with adenocarcinoma if surgically removed with no metastasis; prognosis poor with lymphosarcoma.

If you have questions, please call us so we can discuss this condition with you further.

Thank you for this opportunity to serve you!