



INFLAMMATORY BOWEL DISEASE

ABOUT THE DISEASE

Inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) is a group of gastrointestinal disorders that are characterized by an abnormal accumulation of inflammatory cells within the walls of the gastrointestinal tract. The movement of the stomach and intestines, the ability to digest food, and the ability to absorb food is often compromised.

IBD is the most common cause of persistent (chronic) vomiting and diarrhea in both canine and feline patients. **IBD** is most often seen in middle-aged patients, but some rare forms occur in young animals. Most patients will have vomiting and/or diarrhea once or twice per week for several months or years.

OBTAINING A DIAGNOSIS

A physical examination may yield changes such as weight loss, poor body condition, dehydration, poor hair coat, and sometimes abdominal or intestinal pain.

The most definitive test to confirm **IBD** are biopsies taken during surgical exploration.

Less invasive biopsies acquired by endoscopy or colonoscopy can help yield a diagnosis but might miss disease located deeper in the intestinal tissue.

A specialty blood test exists that looks for low B-vitamin levels, a nutrient that is often difficult to absorb with **IBD**.

Other blood testing will look for other diseases or even low blood proteins to help suggest **IBD**.

TREATMENT

The goals of treatment are to minimize the frequency of symptoms (vomiting and/or diarrhea) and to maintain a healthy body weight.

During bouts of vomiting and diarrhea, patients are treated to address those immediate symptoms. However, long-term management is focused on reducing dietary and environmental stressors.

With patients that may have a food allergy, they are often transitioned to a prescription limited-ingredient diet or hypoallergenic diet.

In more chronic cases, patients may be prescribed low-dose glucocorticoids (steroids) to reduce inflammation in the bowels. Prednisone/Prednisolone is commonly used, but some patients can be managed on Budesonide.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Monitor for changes in stool consistency and frequency of vomiting to help the veterinarian adjust medications and food appropriately.
- **IBD** is a permanent disorder which has several different management strategies.
 - Serious and life-threatening complications can arise if left untreated or treated inappropriately.
- Change to a well-tolerated diet helps manage symptoms.