



## ACUTE COLITIS

### ABOUT THE DISEASE

**Acute colitis** is irritation and inflammation of the colon (large intestine).

The colon's main function is to absorb water, store stool, digest unabsorbed nutrients and contains a large population of beneficial bacteria. If this population of bacteria becomes dysregulated, it can lead to sudden inflammation.

**Acute colitis** usually falls into two categories, either stress-related or diet-related, although some autoimmune and parasite (*giardia*, *whipworms*, etc) forms exist as well.

- **Stress-Related** - caused by sudden changes in the patient's day-to-day life, including boarding, grooming, moving, or adding new people/pets to the environment.
- **Dietary-Related** - caused by new treats, change in diet, or unwanted ingestion (people foods, animal feces, etc.)

While most patients will be otherwise acting normally, some symptoms may include:

- Mucoïd (jelly-like) or liquid diarrhea, often containing red-blood and mucus
  - Bloody stools are usually caused by mild inflammatory trauma to the colon lining, not "internal bleeding"
- Increase in urgency/frequency of defecation
- Straining while defecating
- Nausea, and vomiting

### OBTAINING A DIAGNOSIS

Acute colitis is usually diagnosed based on clinical history, description of patient symptoms, and a normal physical exam.

Additional diagnostics (bloodwork, x-rays) may be performed to help rule out causes and/or how the patient's body has been affected by the symptoms.

A fecal examination may be performed to determine if intestinal parasitism is present.

### TREATMENT

Most patients with acute colitis will have symptoms spontaneously resolved within 3-5 days.

Medications, including probiotics, may be used to counteract bacteria dysregulation within the colon.

Occasionally, antibiotics may be utilized to decrease bacterial loads and reduce "bad bacteria" within the colon. Other supportive care to help with patient symptoms (vomiting, nausea), may be utilized as well.

### TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- While symptoms may resolve within a few days, medical intervention may quicken recovery
- Patients with red-blood or black-blood in their stool should be evaluated by a veterinarian.
- Avoid over-feeding treats or switching diets too quickly