

# Pancreatitis



## What is Pancreatitis?

The pancreas is a small digestive organ located between the stomach and the first part of the small intestine called the duodenum. It has two main functions including insulin production and digestion. Pancreatitis occurs when the pancreas becomes inflamed, due to a long list of possible reasons. Some of these causes include:

- Dietary indiscretion (esp. a meal with high fat content)
- Infection
- Trauma
- Obesity
- Metabolic disorders (i.e. Diabetes)

Sometimes we may never exactly determine the cause of an episode of pancreatitis. An inflamed pancreas begins to leak digestive enzymes which are very irritating and begin to break down any tissue surface that they come into contact with. So begins a vicious cycle.

## Symptoms of Pancreatitis

The symptoms of pancreatitis can be rather vague and may include....

- Lethargy
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Anorexia or poor appetite
- Fever
- Abdominal pain

## How is Pancreatitis diagnosed?

At Glanbrook Veterinary Services, pancreatitis is usually a diagnosis based on a patient's history, bloodwork, and diagnostic imaging (including radiographs +/- ultrasound). Bloodwork may show an elevation in amylase and/or lipase, or an increase in Specific Pancreatic Lipase. As well, white blood cells may be elevating, signifying inflammation and/or infection.

## Treatment of Pancreatitis

Treatment for pancreatitis is symptomatic and supportive, with most severe cases requiring admission to the hospital for IV fluid therapy and IV medicating. Usually, aggressive anti-nausea therapy is imperative so that we can get your pet eating more quickly. The sooner they can eat, the quicker they recover, studies are now showing. Our goal to ensure that your pet is receiving adequate nutrition, all the while resting the pancreas as much as possible. Often times, we will recommend a permanent diet change for your pet, to hopefully reduce the risk of further episodes of pancreatitis. These diets are lower in fat content, and more easily digested than a regular maintenance diet.

You can help to protect your dog from pancreatitis by limiting access to treats, snacks, and nibbles off of your dinner plate, as well as keeping your pet at a healthy weight. Make sure that the extras that you do offer are low in fat, and comprise only about 10% of his/her daily caloric requirements.

