

COLITIS

Colitis is inflammation of the lower intestines. The lining of the bowel becomes inflamed and ulcerated, causing straining and diarrhea. The feces often contain blood and mucus and have a very foul odor. In severe cases, abdominal pain and dehydration occur. Colitis can occur in any age or breed of dog. Common causes of colitis include stress, dietary indiscretions (such as getting into the garbage or eating non-food material), internal parasites, infectious diseases, bacteria, and food allergies. The first step in determining the cause usually involves a complete history, physical examination and stool check. In some cases, lab work, radiographs (x-rays), or endoscopy (direct visualization and biopsy of the intestines with an endoscope) are necessary.

Treatment for colitis usually involves a combination of diet changes and medication. Initially, all food may be withheld for a short period of time in order to allow the intestines to rest. Then small frequent amounts of a bland diet are introduced. You can purchase a prescription bland diet at the clinic or make one at home with boiled white rice and a little lean meat or broth added. Your pet should be allowed unlimited access to clean, fresh water. Try to avoid situations that are stressful or very exciting for your pet. Medications for colitis may include antibiotics, antiinflammatories, antispasmodics, dewormers, and pain medication. Be sure to give all medication as directed and call the clinic if you cannot medicate your pet.

In severe cases, pets with colitis may require hospitalization with intravenous fluids to control dehydration. Please call the clinic for a recheck appointment if your pet's signs worsen, your pet refuses to eat or becomes depressed, or your pet's symptoms reoccur after recovery.