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Acute Colitis (Stress Colitis)

General Information

Acute colitis or stress colitis is an inflammation of the colon (large bowel) resulting in diarrhea. It can be a symptom of stress in a dog being boarded. Separation from owner and/or being in unfamiliar surroundings can produce stress in a boarding dog. Stress can also cause depression of the immune system. Some dogs carry viruses in their systems for months and begin to show symptoms only after being subjected to a stressful situation. Signs range from very mild to severe and may include diarrhea, vomiting, blood and/or mucus in the stools, straining, painful elimination, weight loss, dehydration, weakness, reluctance to walk and abdominal pain. Other causes of acute colitis include diet change, parasites, bacteria, ingestion of foreign material (such as bones, garbage or plant material) and food allergies.

Treatment depends upon the severity of symptoms. Simply withholding food for 24 hours may be enough. A short course of antidiarrheal medication may be prescribed by a veterinarian. In more severe cases, laboratory tests and radiographs (x-rays) may be used to evaluate your pet's condition and devise a treatment plan.

Important Points in Treatment

1. *Medication:* Give all medication as directed. Call the doctor if you cannot carry out any prescribed treatment.
2. *Diet:* Proper feeding is extremely important in treating acute colitis. Follow the instructions checked.
 Do not give your pet any solid food for _____ hours.
 Feed the normal diet.
 Feed Prescription Diet i/d, r/d or w/d.
 Other: _____

3. *Water:* Follow the instructions checked.
 Allow free access to clean, fresh water at all times.
 Provide water as follows: _____

4. *Activity:* Restrict your pet's activity to on-leash walking during recovery. Enforce rest until the stools return to normal.

Notify the Doctor if Any of the Following Occur

- Your pet's signs worsen or new signs appear.
- Your pet seems to be in pain.