

Inflammatory Bowel Disease in Cats

General Information

Inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) represents a group of stomach and intestinal disorders now considered to be one of the most common causes of vomiting and diarrhea in cats. The cause is unknown, but different types of IBD all demonstrate an abundance of inflammatory cells in the lining (mucosa) of the digestive tract.

The presence of inflammatory cells in this disease suggests that the cause is an allergic-type reaction. Inflammatory cells are special cells that appear and participate in the body's response to an irritant. The inflammatory response may benefit the body or be harmful in some cases. We can control the disease better than we can actually cure it.

The types of IBD are named after the inflammatory cell types associated with the disorder. They include lymphocytic-plasmacytic enterocolitis (most common in cats), eosinophilic enteritis (seen more in middle-aged to older cats and less common than the first type) and regional granulomatous enterocolitis, which is rare. All have similar treatment.

Important Points in Treatment

1. Actual cure is much more difficult than control. Control allows your cat comfort and the ability to function normally.
2. Complete laboratory assessment with blood tests and fecal and urine examinations is recommended. Radiographs (x-rays), thyroid evaluation, leukemia tests, biopsies and other tests may allow your veterinarian to rule out other possible disorders. Many diseases produce the same signs as IBD.
3. *Diet:* Dietary trials may be suggested to rule out possible food allergies. Generally, the trial should extend for 4 to 6 weeks. During the trial, it is essential that you feed nothing other than what is recommended. Feeding a single snack or food item not recommended can interfere with the results and negate your efforts.

Notify the Doctor if Any of the Following Occur

- Your pet refuses to eat after 2 days.
- You are unable to administer the prescribed medication.
- Your pet's water intake and urinations increase.
- Your pet's condition worsens or does not improve within several days.