

Pancreatitis

Pancreatitis is inflammation of the pancreas.

The pancreas has two roles, control of blood sugar levels and assisting with digestion.

It is when the digestion function of the pancreas goes wrong and starts attacking itself that most acute pancreatitis occurs. There is no single cause but obesity, some medications, fatty foods, sudden diet changes, and underlying diseases such as diabetes, are most often implicated in pancreatitis.

Pancreatitis may be acute or chronic.

In acute cases we usually see sudden pain or discomfort, nausea, diarrhoea, vomiting, or decreased appetite.

Chronic pancreatitis can be much harder to spot, and is particularly common in cats, often with just a very slight alteration in appetite. Acute pancreatitis can linger on as the chronic form in some cases, so once treatment is completed pancreatic enzymes are rechecked to ensure it has resolved.

Pancreatitis is usually initially treated with intravenous fluids, strong pain relief, and antibiotics in hospital. Once the patient is rehydrated, and their pain is under control then they can usually continue their care at home, which often includes diet changes, pain management and antibiotics.

Animals who have developed pancreatitis can have a relapse, so careful diet management is crucial.

Blood tests to check if the pancreatitis has cleared up after the initial treatment are recommended and ongoing management is discussed at the time of the Revisit.