



YOUR CAT'S HEALTH, OUR PASSION • VOLUME 4, ISSUE 10 • OCTOBER 2012 NEWSLETTER

FELINE PANCREATITIS

Pancreatitis is an inflammatory disease of the pancreas (your kitty's largest organ). The pancreas has two primary functions. It produces important metabolic hormones (including insulin, which helps regulate blood sugar). It also produces digestive enzymes, which are secreted through a duct into your kitty's intestines to help digest food.

Pancreatitis may occur as an acute (mild) or chronic (severe) disease process. Although symptoms can vary, patients may experience lethargy, poor appetite, dehydration, rapid breathing, rapid heart rate, low body temperature, jaundice, vomiting, diarrhea, or a palpable abdominal mass.

To help diagnose pancreatitis, a thorough physical exam is first given. Typically, a complete blood count (CBC) and chemistry panel (group of tests that evaluate the body's electrolyte balance and the status of several major body organs) are also done. The labwork may reveal abnormalities in the kitty's white blood cell (WBC) and red blood cell (RBC) counts, electrolyte imbalances, liver enzyme elevation, or glucose (blood sugar). Other pancreatitis tests include a "Spec fPL," which is a more-specific though less-sensitive test. However, Spec fPL test results combined with clinical symptoms can suggest pancreatitis.

X-rays may be recommended to check for liver enlargement, thickened or dilated bowel loops, or tumors. Ultrasound may be recommended to help detect cysts, lymph node changes, nodules, an enlarged pancreas, or fluid around the pancreas. If an abnormality is seen during ultrasound, a

fine needle aspirate (extraction of cell samples for review on a slide by a pathologist) and cytology (microscopic examination of the cells) may be recommended. If further evaluation is needed, a laparoscopic (small-incision) or open abdominal surgery can be performed to obtain tissue samples for further evaluation (histopathology).

Treatment for pancreatitis begins with fluids, fluids, fluids! The fluids may be recommended either subcutaneously (under the skin) or intravenously, and will help keep your kitty hydrated while helping keep electrolytes in balance. Pain management and anti-vomiting medications may be prescribed; some may be maintained longer term. Nutritional support is usually necessary; this may be achieved by use of an appetite stimulant, via syringe-feeding, or in more severe cases, feeding via a tube surgically placed into the stomach or esophagus. Occasionally, other medications and supplements may be recommended, including steroids, antibiotics, antacids, antioxidants, vitamin B support and, for diabetic kitties, insulin.

Ongoing monitoring of bloodwork—chemistry, cellular counts (WBC/RBC), Spec fPL—is helpful in determining the kitty's response to treatment as well as their overall health.

Although there is no specific cure for pancreatitis, treatment based on maintaining proper hydration and electrolyte balance,



control of other symptoms, and nutritional support can be quite effective. If you notice your kitty displaying any of the symptoms noted above, please contact us.

THE IMPORTANCE OF WELLNESS EXAMS

Feline wellness encompasses every aspect of your kitty's health—overall well-being, vaccinations, dental care, heartworm prevention, flea and tick control, parasite testing and control, and good nutrition.

A regular wellness examination is an important tool for monitoring your kitty's health. Exams provide an opportunity to detect symptoms and prevent diseases in their early stages, or avoid them altogether.

Please visit our web site to download a PDF of our wellness care plan handout for complete wellness care recommendations based on your kitty's age.

Regular wellness exams can help keep your furry family member healthy and greatly extend his or her life. If your kitty hasn't had a wellness exam in more than a year, please contact us to schedule an appointment.

OCTOBER SPECIAL OFFER FOR OUR READERS

Through October 31, receive a \$20 discount off labwork when your kitty comes to the Sacramento Cat Hospital for a wellness exam.

Please speak with us for more information or to schedule your appointment.

Don't miss an issue of our newsletter! Sign up to receive each month's issue by email. To subscribe, just go to www.sacramentocathospital.com, or speak with one of our team members.

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