

Home Treatment of diarrhea in cats

Episodes of mild diarrhea/ soft stools lasting no more than a few days are not unusual. If your cat is eating and alert, there is no cause for alarm. Switch to a bland diet and feed a normal amount of food (see recipe below) divided into 3 to 4 small servings fed at intervals throughout the day. A general approach to the treatment of more severe watery diarrhea is to withhold food for 24 to 36 hours and then start small meals of the bland diet described below. If the diarrhea has resolved, it is likely to be due to stress, bacterial overgrowth (occurs with sudden diet changes) or dietary indiscretions, such as too many treats. If not, it may be a more serious problem, and we advised you to schedule an examination of your cat and begin testing to rule out other causes. Remember, persistent or severe diarrhea require veterinary attention.

- The most common recommendation for dietary control of diarrhea in cats is to use a low fat, moderate fiber diet. There are commercial diets such as Hill's i/d available for this purpose.
A home-made equivalent diet consists of chicken and rice [1 part chicken /2 parts rice]

to which can be added a small amount of wheat dextrin or psyllium (such as Benefiber or Metamucil [™]) to the diet you are making. For kittens chicken baby food and rice cereal may be more convenient especially if one must force feed with a syringe.

Alternate diets that can be tried are

- 1] a mixture of two parts rice and one part boiled hamburger with fat removed.
- 2] Mix one and a half cups of cooked white rice or potato with one half cup of low fat cottage cheese. Some cats prefer pasta to rice
- 3] Live culture yogurt may help control diarrhea in cat . Dose range from 2 to 5ml with each meal is an attempt to add beneficial bacteria to the digestive tract.

Keep the cat / kitten on the bland diet for 1 - 2 days after the diarrhea clears up before starting to go back to the usual diet.. Re-introducing regular food should be gradual, starting with 1/8 regular food mixed in the bland diet. On subsequent days the ratio should be ¼, ½, then ¾th regular food, before totally back to regular food.

Home remedy medications for diarrhea should be used with caution.

Loperamide (Immodium AD [™]) liquid can be used in cats for diarrhea. The usual dosage for cats is 0.1 to 0.2mg/kg every 8 to 12 hours. Oral liquid contains 1 mg/5ml. This is equivalent to 1 – 2ml for a 5 lb cat, 2 – 4ml for a 10 lb cat; 4 – 8 ml/ 15 lb cat. It is OK to try this for a few days but if there is no response you should have the cat and especially kittens examined / rechecked . There is a small chance of causing excitable behavior in cats when using loperamide.

Bismuth subsalicylate (Pepto-Bismol[™], Kaopectate[™]) liquid can be used as a short term treatment for diarrhea. Cats tend to accept this liquid more easily if it is cold. Give 1 – 4 ml every 6 - 8 hours for no more than 2 days.

- Don't cut off the water. Chronic diarrhea can quickly cause a pet to become dehydrated. Make sure that they have fresh clean water at all times. You may consider using a re-hydration fluid like Gatorade to replenish electrolytes.