



Chronic Condition Care: Pancreatitis

Pancreatitis is inflammation of the pancreas. The pancreas produces enzymes that break down food so it can be absorbed into the body. Pancreatitis is highly treatable with fluids, pain medication and anti-nausea drugs. Most cats survive this condition and live comfortably, with treatment, for many years.

Symptoms of pancreatitis include:

- Decreased / lack of appetite
- Vomiting
- Low body temperature
- Lethargy
- Weight loss
- Diarrhea
- Difficulty breathing

Pancreatitis is more common in obese pets and more likely to cause serious illness. See [Nutrition and Weight Control](#) for your cat.

Pancreatitis is more common in female and older cats and is thought to be caused by:

- High fat diets / high levels of fat in the blood
- High levels of calcium in the blood
- Trauma in the pancreas
- Some drugs and toxins
- Scorpion stings (scorpions are indigenous to many western and southern states)

In some cases, pancreatitis occurs after a cat eats a large amount of fatty foods, in particular around the holidays, when pets are often given table scraps. Pancreatitis can also occur along with other disorders such as inflammatory bowel disease and liver disease.

Pay careful attention to symptoms

It's likely that many cats with pancreatitis go undiagnosed since cats often mask their symptoms. Whenever a cat has inflammatory bowel disease or increases in liver enzymes (evident in blood test) the possibility that pancreatitis may be present should be considered. This is especially true when treatment for inflammatory bowel disease or liver disease is not producing the desired results.

Pancreatitis can be easily treated

Pancreatitis is an easily treated disease that cats can live with for many years if treated properly. If your cat is diagnosed with pancreatitis, it's important to keep him/her eating and to carefully monitor food intake. (This is also true of many feline health conditions as cats' systems will shut down if their food intake goes way down.) Treatment often includes fluids and pain medication to keep kitty comfortable.