

INFLAMMATORY BOWEL DISEASE

Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD) is a frustrating chronic disease of the GI tract. It can occur in both dogs and cats. In most cases, the primary lesions are seen in the intestine resulting in diarrhea. However, some cases affect the stomach that results in chronic vomiting. Both the stomach and intestine may be affected in the same pet.

Clinical signs are usually vomiting and/or diarrhea. Most affected pets do not lose a significant amount of weight. Most eat well and otherwise appear normal.

An allergic response is the usual cause of the problem. The actual cause of the allergic response is unknown. The lining of the affected portion of the GI tract becomes infiltrated with inflammatory cells that interfere with the ability of the pet to digest and absorb nutrients. Food allergy is sometimes thought to be the cause, but most cases result from an unidentifiable reason.

A diagnosis is often suspected from the medical history and physical examination results. Sometimes the diagnosis is confirmed by trial treatment with drugs for this particular condition. However the particular drugs needed may vary for each pet requiring a trial series of several drugs to determine what will be appropriate for each individual pet. Often a hypoallergenic diet is included in the treatment recommendations. A definite diagnosis requires a biopsy of the affected part of the GI tract.

THERE IS NO CURE FOR THIS CONDITION. However it **CAN BE CONTROLLED** in most cases. Drug therapy may be required for the remaining life of the pet. Drug protocols may require alterations if the condition returns while on a particular therapeutic regimen.