



FACT SHEET wellbeing, healing and disease prevention

Reading time: 8 minutes

Pancreatitis - Symptoms, Causes and Treatment



Pancreatitis in dogs is one of those conditions that owners must be informed about before it strikes because the warning signs may not always be obvious at first. the symptoms might be mistaken for something less serious, and yet it's potentially lifethreatening.

One of the most common diseases of an **unhealthy** pancreas is pancreatitis. The medical definition of pancreatitis is simple: "inflammation of the pancreas" and it can impair the exocrine function of the pancreas, including the release of digestive enzymes. But like all serious conditions, there is more to it than that.

This is where the liver comes in. Every single animal/human today has a liver

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that needs proper care. Your pet's liver plays a fundamental and critical role in her/his health and in what your pet's health will look like in 8 - 15 years, even if your pet doesn't suffer with any liver symptoms or illnesses right now or you've been told your pet's liver is in good working order.

The fact is, your pet's liver plays a critical key role in your pet's health such as:

- Processing fat and protecting the pancreas
- Glucose and glycogen storage
- Vitamin and mineral storage
- Disarming and detaining harmful materials
- Screening and filtering blood
- Guarding your pet with its own personalized immune system

So, as you can see if your pet's liver is **NOT** functioning optimally, the pancreas is not protected and that puts your pet's pancreas at risk.

What is the Pancreas and what does it do?

The pancreas is a tiny gland that has a **big job**. It's located just below your dog's stomach and is attached to his/her small intestine. It's part of both the endocrine system and the digestive system. It plays an **essential role in converting the food, we eat, into fuel for the body's cells**.

The pancreas has 3 major functions:

- produce and store hormones (insulin and glucagon) to help maintain proper blood sugar levels.
- produce and store enzymes (trypsin and chymotrypsin) to help the body digest protein and fats.
- release enzymes that aid in digestion.

When the pancreas is under attack, the result is pancreatitis.

Classic signs of pancreatitis in dogs:

- Hunched back
- Repeated vomiting (either several times within a few hours or periodically over several days)
- Pain or distention of the abdomen (dog appears uncomfortable or bloated)
- Diarrhoea
- Loss of appetite
- Dehydration
- Weakness/lethargy
- Fever

What causes/triggers Pancreatitis?

As mentioned above the liver plays a critical role in **processing fat** and **protecting the pancreas**. But pancreatitis is also **brought on by** diet and stress. Stress causes high levels of cortisol in the body. Foods that are high in fat and foods that

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are processed, including grain-based and grain free kibble, are hard for your dog to digest (his/her pancreas has to **work harder** than it should, causing it to become inflamed)

Dogs' digestive tracts are **shorter than ours**, making them well suited to handle meats, bones, organs, veggies and fruit, but **NOT** starches such as legumes, whole grains, nuts, seeds, and other plant foods.

The fact is, your dog/cat does not have the enzyme "cellulase". However, many of our pet's **need** it, especially if they eat kibble. **Cellulase** helps your **pet** break down fibre. Most kibbles contain fibrous fillers like cellulose. So, a digestive enzyme containing **cellulase** such as Dishy Dogs Digestit Pet, is a must to ease your pet's digestion. Also, our pet's do not produce amylase in their saliva and only **small measures** of amylase are excreted from the pancreas. This is because dogs are carnivorous and should only eat a small amount of vegetables and fruits. The amylase enzyme is necessary to break down/digest starches from fruits and vegetables. For more information, read our fact sheet on Gastrointestinal disorders and Digestive Enzymes.

In a healthy pancreas, one that isn't overworked or stressed, **digestive enzymes** are activated when they reach the small intestine. However, if your dog has pancreatitis, those enzymes are activated too early in the process, when they're still in the pancreas. This results in pain and inflammation and can cause damage to the pancreas and its surrounding tissue and other organs. At this point the pancreas actually begins to digest itself.

Other things that can lead to acute pancreatitis include:

- Trauma (trauma to the pancreas is thought to be behind diabetes type 1)
- Infection
- Autoimmune disease
- Cancer
- Coexisting hormonal diseases (diabetes, hypothyroidism, hypercalcemia)
- Medications (sulfa antibiotics, seizure medications, chemotherapy)
- Organophosphate insecticide exposure

Obesity can be a problem too. It causes altered fat metabolism that can lead to pancreas issues.

Pancreatitis is a **serious condition**, and it needs to be treated carefully and as soon as you have a diagnosis from your vet. If pancreatitis goes untreated, pancreatic enzymes can leak into the abdominal cavity, damaging the abdominal lining and other organs like the kidney and liver.

How to tell if your dog has pancreatitis: Dog pancreatitis can either be **acute or chronic**. Both can have symptoms ranging from mild to severe.

Acute Dog Pancreatitis is an attack of pancreatitis that comes on suddenly, usually with no history of the condition. **Acute pancreatitis can lead to organ**

failure (kidneys, lungs, heart), septic shock or death. So, get your dog to a holistic vet quickly.

- Often these attacks come around the holidays when dogs are more likely to get into food that is very fatty, either from the garbage or from overly eager feeders of table scraps.
- Stressful changes to regular routine, such as boarding at a kennel, having company or family members going away or extra commotion and visitors over the holidays, can also cause acute attacks. These tend to be the more serious of the two.

Chronic Dog Pancreatitis develops over time, more slowly than acute. It usually happens in dogs with:

- Enzyme deficiency
- Endocrine disorders
- Nutritional imbalances

What makes chronic pancreatitis even more of a problem is that the symptoms are less obvious – you may not even see symptoms at all. Often dogs develop chronic pancreatitis after repeated acute attacks. Chronic pancreatitis is less serious, but it can still destroy 80-90% of pancreas cells if it's not controlled. It can lead to serious conditions like diabetes or exocrine pancreatic insufficiency (EPI).

Diet is key in managing chronic pancreatitis.

How to manage and prevent pancreatitis:

- Feed fresh, whole food, raw meat diet. Raw meat, organ meat, sardines, vegetables, and fruit. As mentioned, your dog's digestive tract is **small**, and it can easily digest meat and bone. A fresh, raw diet that's well balanced will help his **digestive system flourish**. For high-quality raw food meals see Dishy Dogs superfood meals;
- Limit the fatty foods in your dog's diet (remove excess fat from meats and chicken);
- Get rid of starchy carbs (that means NO KIBBLE / DRY BISCUITS). That stuff is not only hard to digest (meaning it's stressful for the pancreas), it's also full of mycotoxins and aflatoxins − cancer-causing moulds found in grains such as corn, wheat, and rice, as well as nuts and legumes grown in poor conditions or stored in substandard environments or for extended periods of time:
- Include supplements such as:
 - A high potency liver tonic such as Dishy Dogs Liver Pet.
 - Include a high potency pancreas tonic such as Dishy Dogs Pancreas Pet. It will provide supporting and healing herbs for your pet's pancreas.
 - **Digestive Enzymes** enzymes that contain pancreatic enzymes such as amylase, protease, cellulase, lipase will help relieve some of the burden on your dog's pancreas. When the pancreas is **inflamed**, its ability to produce

- digestive enzymes and get them to the right place is **compromised**. Dishy Dogs Digestit Pet is chock full of these enzymes and more.
- Omega-3 fatty acids even though it may seem like this would be too much fat a dog with pancreatitis, omega-3 fatty acids can help control your dog's blood lipid levels. See Dishy Dogs Omega Pet.
- Prebiotics and probiotics to support overall gut and digestive health
- Feed your pet prebiotics and probiotics. Probiotics (and the prebiotics that feed them) help keep **bad** bacteria in check and they're often depleted when your dog has an acute attack. Once he has recovered, feed them every day. For a high-quality probiotic, see Dishy Dogs Probiotic Pet;
- Provide regular exercise and adequate rest.
- Keep your dog at a healthy (lean) weight.
- Don't **over-vaccinate**. Research has found vaccines are a major factor in autoimmune and inflammatory conditions, AND they **contain heavy metals** that cause illness in pets. Read our fact sheet on heavy metals.

Other supplements to include in your pet's healing/prevention routine:

- Add zinc (as liquid zinc sulfate) ¼ dropper full to your pet's food on a daily basis. Zinc is critical for liver health, autoimmune conditions, adrenal problems, allergies, arthritis, cancer, skin disorders, brain fog, diabetes, fatigue, heart palpitations, hepatitis, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, inflammation, SIBO, sinus infections, weight issues, vertigo, tinnitus, GME, seizures, lupus, lyme disease, thyroid problems, epstein barr, IBD/IBS, UTIs, candida, and every other symptom and condition;
- Add selenium (one (1) to two (2) drops per week). In addition to decreasing oxidative stress, selenium may help lower the risk of certain cancers. This has been attributed to selenium's ability to reduce DNA damage and oxidative stress, boost your immune system, and destroy cancer cells:
- Do regular Heavy Metals detoxes (Dishy Dogs Detox Pet) as this will not only support/cleanse your pet's liver it will minimise disease, period. Read our Heavy Metals fact sheet.

Your dog's pancreas **has an important job** to do. Make **sure** it is up to the task. Dog pancreatitis is a serious condition, but luckily you can support the body to **heal naturally** and prevent it from happening again.

The team at Dishy Dogs believes "prevention is the best cure". If you are interested in wellbeing, disease prevention and healing your pet, then ask us about Dishy Dogs range of superfood meals, supplements, bone broth and treats or go to our website https://dishydogs.com.au

Dishy Dogs is certified "Australian Made and Owned". Our ingredients are 100% human grade, 100% preservative, gluten, dairy, egg and additive *free* with *no* added salt, sugar, flavour or colour.