

# Gastroenteritis



Gastroenteritis is a condition in which some or all of the gastrointestinal (GI) tract is inflamed. Clinical signs associated with gastroenteritis include:

- vomiting
- diarrhea
- abdominal pain
- drooling
- general restlessness
- excessive gas

Gastroenteritis may be caused by infection, parasites, emotional upset or irritation from eating unfamiliar foods. Unfamiliar foods can include changing brands of food, consuming human food, or eating spoiled garbage and foreign materials. Recurrent attacks may be due to more complex causes, and lab tests and X-rays may be needed. Before conducting lab tests, you may wish to try more conservative treatments at home. The following document outlines some general guidelines for gastroenteritis home therapy.

## Conservative Home Therapy

### **If your pet is vomiting:**

- Withhold all food and water for six to eight hours.
- When your pet has gone eight hours without vomiting, give a very small portion of water (1-2 T) or crushed ice cubes every 30-60 minutes. Gradually increase the amount offered until your pet can once again self-feed on water without vomiting.
- If no vomiting has occurred for 12 to 24 hours, begin to offer small portions of a bland diet (described below) every three to four hours. After another 24 hours has passed with still no vomiting, gradually increase the amount of food to the appropriate amount based on your pet's weight. Be cautious; overfeeding may precipitate vomiting.
- If vomiting remains under control for two days on a bland diet, begin adding your pet's normal foods in increasing amounts while decreasing the bland diet foods in equivalent amounts. Do this over two to four days until your pet is back to a regular feeding schedule.

**If at any time during this treatment your pet begins to vomit again, or if your pet becomes lethargic or reluctant to move, conservative home therapy may not be appropriate. If this is the case, call us at (651) 283-7216 to schedule an appointment.**

## If your pet has diarrhea:

–Do not restrict water unless vomiting is also present. In the case of severe diarrhea, an electrolyte solution could replace plain water. The solution can be made by adding sugar to low sodium chicken or beef broth.

–Feed your pet only a bland diet (described below). Feed small amounts every three to four hours. If your pet does not have diarrhea for over 24 hours, gradually increase the amount fed and reduce the frequency of feedings. Keep in mind that it is better to underfeed than overfeed.

–After your pet has had formed stools for two days, begin adding your pet's normal food to the bland diet in increasing amounts while decreasing the amount of bland diet in equivalent amounts. Do this over a period of two to four days until your pet is back to a regular feeding schedule.

**If you notice bloody stools, black tarry stools or continuous diarrhea, please contact us immediately at (651) 283-7216.**

## Exercise

Exercise should be light- to moderate-intensity and supervised. Do not allow your pet to access any indigestible materials such as rawhide or grass, except as prescribed.

## Medication

Please do NOT use any human medications for your pet without first consulting our veterinarian.

## Following a bland diet:

We recommend Royal Canin GI Low Fat dry and/or canned diets for dogs, or Royal Canin GI HE diet for cats. You can also make your own food at home. To do so, combine a carbohydrate and protein from the following list:

Carbohydrate	Protein
Boiled white rice	Boiled and drained lean hamburger meat
Boiled potatoes	Low-fat cottage cheese
Boiled plain pasta	Boiled chicken (no bones or skin)

\*Do not boil any carbohydrate with a meat, as the carbohydrate will absorb fat from the meat.

Mix one carbohydrate with one protein in a 3:1 ratio (eg 3/4 cup boiled white rice + 1/4 cup boiled chicken). Feed your pet approximately one cup of carbohydrate and four ounces of protein per 20 pounds of body weight. Divide this into several small meals.

**Example 1:** A cat that weighs 10 pounds would need 1/2 cup carb + 2 oz. protein throughout the day.

**Example 2:** A dog that weighs 30 pounds would need 1 1/2 cups carb + 6 oz. protein throughout the day.

After three days on a bland diet, gradually switch your pet to a regular diet over a three- to four-day period. To do so, slowly add increasing amounts of regular food to the diet and reduce the bland foods in equivalent amounts.



**If you have any questions about gastroenteritis, conservative home therapy or a bland diet, don't hesitate to contact us! We can be reached at (651) 283-7216 or [housepawsmn@gmail.com](mailto:housepawsmn@gmail.com)**