

# Metropolitan Veterinary Hospital

## Akron Veterinary Internal Medicine/Oncology Practice

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### **PANCREATITIS: A GUIDE OF "FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS" FOR DOG OWNERS**

#### **What is Pancreatitis?**

Pancreatitis is inflammation of the pancreas. There are two types of pancreatitis:

- 1.) Acute: Occurs abruptly
  - a.) Mild- usually recovery occurs without complications
  - b.) Severe- complications will occur; different body systems may be affected
- 2.) Chronic: continuous inflammation
  - a.) Mild- complications and some damage to the pancreas itself
  - b.) Severe- fibrosis, irreversible cell destruction, complications such as diabetes, bile duct obstruction and others.

#### **What is the pancreas and why is it important?**

The pancreas is a gland located in the abdomen near the stomach, small intestine and liver. It produces enzymes to help your dog in the digestion of proteins and fats and also neutralized the acid contents that enter the intestines from the stomach.

#### **What causes pancreatitis in my dog?**

There are many different causes and predisposing factors for pancreatitis in dogs. Some of them are obesity, diets high in fat (including certain table foods), tumors, endocrine diseases such as Cushing's, diabetes or hypothyroidism; certain drugs such as azathioprine, L-asparaginase, sulfonamides, tetracyclines, furosemide and thiazide diuretics; abdominal trauma or surgery and infection. There are also some breeds that are predisposed to develop pancreatitis: Miniture Schnauzers, Miniature Poodles and Cocker Spaniels.

#### **What can my veterinarian do to treat my dog?**

There is no specific therapy for pancreatitis. The goals of treatment are supportive care with intravenous fluids, to "rest" the pancreas by restriction of food and water for at least 3 to 5 days and to control and prevent any possible complications.

#### **What are the chances that my dog will get better?**

Although most dogs recover, pancreatitis may have unpredictable life-threatening complications; thus the prognosis will be guarded in some cases.

#### **What can a dog owner do to prevent pancreatitis in the future?**

There is no preventative method that will be 100% effective against pancreatitis but there are some things that may be helpful: weight loss for obese dogs, avoiding high fat diets and avoiding drugs/medications that may predispose to the disease.