



# COLITIS & DIARRHOEA

## FACT SHEET 17

Colitis and diarrhoea are both conditions of the bowel involving diarrhoea or loose motions and warrant different types of treatment depending on the cause and symptoms.

### THE SIGNS & SYMPTOMS OF DIARRHOEA

Diarrhoea normally occurs as a result of upsets within the bowel, particularly the small intestine. This is the section of bowel directly after the stomach and is involved in the digestion and absorption of food.

Symptoms of diarrhoea can include:

- A change in stool consistency - anything between soft and watery stools
- A variation in the colour of the stools, including yellowish or clay coloured stools
- An increase in the number of times that motions are passed
- Stools which are foul smelling
- The presence of blood (normally dark) in the stools

There are two types of diarrhoea, **acute** and **chronic**.

**Acute diarrhoea** occurs suddenly, only lasts a few days and is normally easy to clear up. However, some types of acute diarrhoea can be life threatening, especially those where blood is present. Causes of acute diarrhoea include:

- Overeating
- Sudden changes to diet
- Consumption of food which is decaying or inappropriate
- Bacterial infections
- Viral infections
- Stress
- Allergic reactions to food components

**Chronic diarrhoea** is a long-term problem where there has been either a continual problem or where a problem keeps coming back. Causes of chronic diarrhoea include:

- Malabsorption
- Pancreatic disease
- Overgrowth of bacteria within the bowel
- Inflammatory bowel disease
- Parasites

### MANAGING DIARRHOEA

Animals with **acute diarrhoea** should be starved for 24 hours to allow the bowel to rest and repair itself. Then feed a bland diet that is easy to digest. Foods that are

low in fibre and fat are ideal. Lean white meat, fish and cooked eggs are suitable. Rice is a good carbohydrate source to add, as it is very easy to digest.

It is important to avoid all milk and milk related products and rich foods like liver or other offal. Once things return to normal, gradually reintroduce the old diet over a few days.

If your cat or dog is prone to bouts of diarrhoea then you should consider changing the diet to one of the following recipes:

Dogs – canned foods

- Senior With Chicken, Lamb & Rice , which is low in fat
- Senior With Turkey, Rabbit & Rice, which is low in fat
- Adult-Original With Chicken & Tripe, which is easily digested

Dogs – dry food

- OPTIONS Sensitive Digestion Rich in Lamb and Rice plus added herbs

Cats – canned food

- Adult With Salmon & Tuna, which is easily digested and low in fat
- Adult Original With Chicken & Turkey, which is easily digested and low in fat
- Older With Turkey & Lamb, which is low in fat

Cats – dry food

- OPTIONS Healthy Skin Rich in Chicken & Turkey With Rice which is low in fat when measured on a dry matter basis

Cases of **chronic diarrhoea** can only really be treated after a diagnosis has been established. Special enzyme supplements will be needed if pancreatic insufficiency is diagnosed.

If a dietary allergy or dietary intolerance is suspected, then you will need to organise an exclusion diet to help eliminate the cause. Some of the more common allergens include wheat, beef, soya and dairy products although any food can become an allergen.

## **THE SIGNS & SYMPTOMS of COLITIS**

The colon is the last part of the large intestine extending from the caecum to the rectum. Inflammation of the colon is referred to as colitis and is a relatively common condition in dogs. Colitis is far less common in cats.

Symptoms of colitis can include:

- Stools containing mucus or jelly-like material
- Small stools, which are passed frequently
- Fresh blood in the stools
- Diarrhoea or loose stools
- Variable stool consistency, from complete liquid to solid or a mixture of both.
- More frequent passage of stools up to six times a day or more
- Straining before, during and after stools are passed
- Flatulence
- Vomiting, fever, abdominal pain and weight loss in severe cases

## **CAUSES OF COLITIS**

Colitis can affect dogs or cats of any age, although some breeds of dog are particularly prone to this condition.

Common causes include:

- Food allergies or dietary intolerance to specific food ingredients
- Stress
- Parasites, including hookworm and whipworm

Many cases of colitis are idiopathic in origin, meaning that the exact cause cannot be identified.

## **MANAGING COLITIS**

Once a diagnosis has been established, your vet may use a number of drugs to help control the symptoms. These include antibiotics and corticosteroids such as prednisolone. However, it is often possible to control the illness by other means.

## **DIETARY HELP**

Diet is now recognised as being of major importance in the long-term management of colitis. The following types of diet are known to help:

### **High fibre diets**

The extra fibre in foods of this type will help regulate the passage of food through the gut and control the level of water present in the faeces. The following Denes products may be useful:

Dogs – canned food

- Low Calorie With Chicken and Liver
- Senior With Chicken, Lamb & Rice
- Senior With Turkey, Rabbit & Rice

Dogs – complementary foods

- Wholegrain Mixer
- Wholegrain Baked Biscuits
- Low Calorie Baked Biscuits

Alternatively, you can add extra fibre by adding bran flakes, oatmeal, wheatgerm or cooked lentils to any of our other canned recipes. For each 100 grams of food, add approximately 1 heaped teaspoon of fibre and mix in well.

### **Cats**

Adding wheat bran or oat bran to the diet can help. All of the Denes cat recipes are suitable, excluding Kitten with Rabbit and Chicken. Aim to add approximately 1 level tablespoon per 400g can of food.

### **Highly digestible diets**

Diets of this type leave a low stool volume, reducing faecal mass. Suitable Denes recipes include:

Dogs – canned food

- Adult-Original With Chicken & Tripe

Cats – canned food

- Adult-Original With Chicken & Turkey

### **Low allergy diets**

Many cases of colitis are caused by dietary intolerance or allergy to certain components or substances in the food. Occasionally, this may be due to food additives. The most common food allergens that affect dogs are wheat gluten and beef. Chicken or fish sometimes causes problems in cats.

The following Denes products may help where food allergies are suspected:

### **WHEAT GLUTEN FREE**

Dog recipes – canned/trays

- Adult Tripe Mix Rich in Turkey
- Senior With Chicken, Lamb & Rice
- Senior With Turkey, Rabbit & Rice
- Select Single Serve dog trays. All except Turkey & Vegetables

Dog recipes - dry

- Puppy-Growth Rich in Chicken & Rice
- Denes OPTIONS Sensitive Digestion Rich in Lamb & Rice
- Denes OPTIONS Healthy Skin Rich in Chicken With Turkey & Rice

Dogs – complementary foods

- Wheat Gluten Free Baked Biscuits

Cat recipes – canned/trays

- Kitten With Rabbit & Chicken
- Adult Original With Chicken & Turkey
- Select Single Serve cat trays (all recipes)

Cat recipes – dry

- Denes OPTIONS Healthy Skin Rich in Chicken & Turkey
- Denes OPTIONS Dental Care With Fresh Salmon & Rice

### **BEEF FREE**

Dog recipes – canned/trays

- Senior With Chicken, Lamb & Rice
- Select Single Serve trays except Beef & Heart

Dog recipes – dry

- Puppy-Growth Rich in Chicken & Rice
- Denes OPTIONS Sensitive digestion Rich in Lamb & Rice
- Denes OPTIONS Healthy Skin Rich in Chicken with Turkey & Rice

Cat recipes – canned/trays

- Adult With Rabbit & Chicken
- Select Single Serve cat trays (all recipes)

Cat recipes – dry

- Denes OPTIONS Healthy Skin Rich in Chicken & Turkey
- Denes OPTIONS Dental Care With Fresh Salmon & Rice

CEREAL FREE

Dog recipes - canned

- Adult Tripe Mix Rich in Turkey

### **HERBAL REMEDIES for DIARRHOEA & COLITIS**

In addition to dietary measures to help treat these conditions, herbal remedies can also be of value. The following products are useful:

- **Denes Garlic Tablets**, which is a licensed herbal medicine. It is used to control the levels of bacteria in the gut by encouraging growth of friendly bacteria and inhibiting those which are not beneficial. It is a good remedy for helping with diarrhoea of any cause
- **Garlic** also has some antispasmodic effect, helping relieve some of the tension in the bowel which arises during more severe colitis attacks
- **Denes Digestion Plus Tablets**. This herbal supplement contains peppermint, ginger, agrimony and marshmallow root to help soothe the lining of the bowel and firm up the stools
- **Denes Tranquil Plus Tablets**. This herbal supplement is useful where psychological stress is a factor. Valerian, one of the ingredients, is an antispasmodic, helping to relax the bowel where straining is present
- **Denes Probiotic+ Powder**. The combination of probiotics and herbs in this supplement will help support and stabilise the bacteria within the bowel. It is a good remedy for all types of diarrhoea and colitis

Other useful Denes fact sheets to read:

- Exocrine pancreatic disease
- Probiotics
- Garlic

If you have any queries concerning your pet's health or feeding problems, you can contact us for free pet care advice by:

- Visiting our website [www.denes.com](http://www.denes.com)
- Emailing us at [info@denes.com](mailto:info@denes.com)
- Calling us on **01273 325364** Mon-Fri, 9am – 12Noon
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