

# Pancreatitis!

## Holiday Topics - Thanksgiving - Pancreatitis

Let's talk about the holidays! With it being November and all the delicious food that will be made for Thanksgiving what is more appropriate to talk about than pancreatitis!

Pancreatitis is inflammation of the pancreas which is an organ that makes and secretes digestive enzymes and insulin. It lies next to the first part of the duodenum (small intestine) where it connects to the stomach. Both pancreatic ducts and bile ducts from the gallbladder/liver exit into the duodenum and play a role in the digestion of food. One thing you should know about the pancreas, it's a diva. It doesn't take much to make it mad! Pancreatitis will classically develop after ingestion of food that is not part of a pet's normal diet, particularly foods that are high in fat. Thanksgiving makes the perfect time for our pets to snag some fatty table scraps!

What are some signs to watch for for pancreatitis?

- Abdominal pain - inflammation of the pancreas when profound can cause generalized inflammation of nearby organs such as the stomach, small intestine and liver which can lead to intestinal cramping and discomfort
- Vomiting
- Lethargy
- Nausea - pets do not have to be vomiting to be nauseous. A loss of appetite or excessive drooling can also be more subtle signs of nausea.
- Anorexia or loss of appetite
- Diarrhea
- Weakness
- Dehydration is a common finding due to lack of fluid intake and excessive loss of body fluids from vomiting and diarrhea.
- Fever

Most cases of pancreatitis when caught early can be treated with outpatient therapy. This typically includes subcutaneous fluids, nausea meds, pain meds, anti-diarrheal meds, or appetite stimulants.

Severe cases of pancreatitis can make pets extremely sick. They can develop shock, biliary obstruction, fluid development in the abdomen, clotting disorders, gastrointestinal ulcers or elevated kidney or liver values. These cases typically require aggressive care in which pets are hospitalized for intravenous fluids, injectable medications and sometimes even feeding tubes are placed. Severe cases typically will require additional tests such as blood work or other diagnostics.

In addition to dietary indiscretion as a cause for pancreatitis. Ingestion of foreign material (wrappers, etc) can cause gastrointestinal obstruction or blockage which can also trigger pancreatitis, but will warrant additional treatment as well. So be sure to keep an eye on wrappers, packaging and containers too!

Happy Holidays!