

MANAGING SIMPLE GASTROENTERITIS IN DOGS



Simple gastroenteritis (GE) is a very common ailment in dogs. The most common clinical sign is diarrhea, with occasional vomiting and lethargy as well. Most of the time, the dog acts completely normal except for the symptoms. Many things can bring on an episode of GE, including stressful events, inappropriate diet, and some minor viruses, just to name a few.

Most dogs respond very well to conservative management of this syndrome. The primary means of managing this disease is diet. If you think about how we handle recovering from the flu, the idea is very similar. Normally, we rest our stomach for 12-24 hours by not eating anything, followed by eating something bland, such as soda crackers and club soda.

Dietary therapy for GE in dogs involves first resting their gastrointestinal tract for 24 hours. During this time they are fasted; no food is allowed. The dog can have as much water as it wants, as we do not want it to get dehydrated. After 24 hours of fasting, we start the dog on small, frequent meals of a bland diet, usually rice mixed with either hamburger that has been boiled, or cottage cheese. This diet is very easy to digest, not involving a lot of pancreatic enzymes, which can stir up inflammation. After 48 hours the dog can usually be started on its regular food again.

Some dogs require additional therapy for GE in the form of medication. Occasionally antibiotics and antacids will be used to manage the problem. You should consult with your veterinarian to determine whether your dog needs medication to help manage the signs. If your dog continues to have clinical signs in spite of therapy (with or without medication) you should consult with a veterinarian.

Instructions for Managing Gastroenteritis

1) Fast your dog for 24 hours. Do not give any food, but it can have as much water as it wants. Beginning 24 hours after the last meal, begin feeding one of the following diets as directed below:

a) Mix 2 cups rice cooked with **either** 1 pint of low-fat cottage cheese **or** 1 pound of hamburger that has been **boiled and has had the fat drained**. This mixture can be kept in the refrigerator. Feed ____ cup(s) of this mixture at each meal; feed every 4-6 hours over the next 24 hours.

b) Feed ____ cans of Hill's I/D or Purina EN every 4-6 hours for 24 hours.

2) Give the following medications as recommended by your veterinarian:

- Prilosec:** 20 mg once daily
- Cerenia:** 1 2 **tablets once daily**
- Metronidazole:** ½ 1 2 3 4 5 **tablets once daily**
- Immodium A-D:** 0.5 1.0 1.5 2.0 mg **every 6 hours for no more than 3 doses**
- Kaolin-Pectin (Bac-Cor):** ____ cc OR tsp **every 12 hours for 2-3 days**