

Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD)

What is it?

IBD is a term used to describe symptoms of gastrointestinal upset caused by inflammation in the bowel.

What causes it?

Many things can cause inflammation in the bowel. IBD can result from autoimmunity, ingestion of irritant, dietary indiscretion, and stress/anxiety, among other etiologies.

Symptoms usually manifest as persistent, intermittent loose stool and/or diarrhea. In some cases, the dog may go off her food or lose weight.



Tests/Diagnosis

Tests/Diagnosis:

IBD is a possible diagnosis when other causes of diarrhea have been tested for and ruled out. It can be a lengthy process of exclusion. Canine diarrhea can be caused by worms, giardia, food allergy/intolerances, bacterial infection and situational stress/anxiety. Once these are crossed off, your vet may suggest an ultrasound of the intestines to observe abnormal thickness of the intestinal walls and bloodwork.

The definitive diagnosis of IBD can only be confirmed via biopsy of the intestinal wall, a surgical procedure. However, specimen quality can vary, pathology can come back inconclusive.

Prevention:

The disease is not preventable, but flare-ups can be minimized through diet, proper exercise, stress reduction, and medication.

Treatment

Treatment for IBD consists of therapies to reduce diarrhea/vomiting, promote appetite, and decrease inflammation. If any cause of irritation was identified, it should be eliminated.

Your vet may recommend a diet trial, or prescription diet, medication, and probiotics. Recent studies have suggested fecal transplant therapy from a healthy donor can have beneficial effects on dogs with IBD.

*This information is not meant to be a substitute for veterinary care.
Always follow the instructions provided by your veterinarian.*

*Newfoundland Dog Health Fact Sheet produced by the NCA Health & Longevity Committee
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