

PANCREATIC PROBLEMS

The Pancreas

The pancreas, is one of the most important glands in the endocrine and digestive systems. It is located next to the stomach and large intestine. The pancreas serves two major functions in the body. One is to produce insulin and alter hormones that regulate carbohydrate metabolism. The other is to secrete digestive enzymes which break down dietary proteins, fats, and carbohydrates so they can be absorbed by the body.

Pancreatitis

Normally, the pancreas secretes inactive enzymes into the small intestine, where they are then activated for digestion. Pancreatitis develops when inactive enzymes become active in the pancreas itself. The result is the pancreas inappropriately begins to digest itself.

Symtoms

Symptoms are wide ranging and varying in severity. The most common symptoms may include poor appetite, vomiting, depression, dehydration, abdominal pain, diarrhea and fever.

Diagnosis

Since pancreatitis mimics other gastrointestinal disorders and renal failure, laboratory tests, x-rays, or ultrasound may be necessary to confirm or rule out pancreatitis as a diagnosis.

Treatment

The cause of pancreatitis is usually unknown, therefore your veterinarian will treat the symptoms. Treatment usually includes administration of fluids while withholding food to allow the pancreas to rest. Your veterinarian may want to prescribe antibiotis and may wish to evaluate other medications or environmental factors to be sure it is not drug or toxin induced.

Follow-Up

Patients should improve within 24 to 48 hours, depending on the severity of the problem. Pancreatitis can be a one time problem or may be chronic or

Mountain View Animal Hospital
129 Main Street, Essex Junction, VT 05452
Phone/Fax 802-879-6311
www.vtvvet.com

recurrent. Most patients with uncomplicated pancreatitis recover after a single episode and do well as long as high-fat foods are avoided.