

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

Pyometra

Pyometra is a condition in which pus accumulates in the uterus. It generally occurs several weeks following a heat cycle. The number of glands in the uterus increase, and the fluid secreted by the glands provides a prime environment for the growth of bacteria. Once an infection in the uterus develops, your animal can become very ill from the infection as well as effects upon the liver and kidneys. This disease can be quite dangerous and even fatal. It is most commonly seen in older dogs that have not been spayed and is seen less commonly in cats.

Most cases of pyometra arise spontaneously. The effects of estrogen and progesterone upon the uterus stimulate the increase in the number of glands in the uterus. Therefore, estrogen injections to prevent pregnancy as well as progesterone therapy have been shown to cause pyometra. Signs of pyometra are excessive water consumption and urination, appetite loss and depression.

Diagnosis of pyometra is generally done during a physical examination of the pet in which the veterinarian finds an enlarged abdomen that may or may not be accompanied by vaginal discharge. Taking a swab of the vagina and examining for white blood cells and bacteria using a microscope may help diagnose pyometra. Other tests such as blood tests, urinalysis, urine culture for bacteria, abdominal x-rays, and ultrasound all provide the veterinarian with useful information to help confirm a diagnosis of pyometra.

Recommended treatment of pyometra is to surgically remove both the uterus and the ovaries, a process called ovariohysterectomy. Supportive care prior to and following the surgery is very important since most pets with pyometra are quite ill. Fluid therapy is necessary to help restore kidney function and antibiotics are often given to treat infection as well. If you want to breed your dog, and the case of pyometra is mild, antibiotics and prostaglandin are often used. It is not recommended that this approach be taken due to the severity of pyometra and the possibility of recurrence.

Treatment of your pet once they go home is very important. All prescribed medications should be given as directed. Monitoring your pet's appetite, water consumption, and urination is important; they should return to normal. If your pet continues to be depressed and does not want to eat, call your doctor immediately.