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Gastritis in Dogs

What is gastritis?

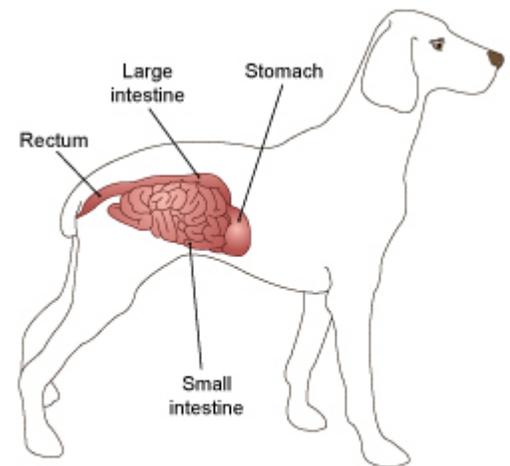
Gastritis is defined as inflammation of the gastric mucosa. The word is derived from the Greek "*gastro*"- meaning "of the stomach" and "*-itis*", meaning "inflammation". Gastritis may be *acute* or *chronic*, and it may be associated with conditions that are more serious.

What are the signs of gastritis?

The most common clinical signs associated with gastritis are acute vomiting and decreased appetite (anorexia). Other clinical signs may include dehydration, lethargy or depression, increased thirst, blood in the vomit or feces, and abdominal pain. Acute gastritis is typically self-limiting and of short (less than twenty-four hours) duration. The cause is normally not discovered because the clinical signs usually resolve before diagnostic testing is performed.

What causes gastritis?

Acute gastritis occurs frequently in the dog. Dogs are particularly prone to "dietary indiscretion" which includes the ingestion of spoiled or raw food, non-food items such as garbage, cat-litter, foreign objects, and plants, exposure to toxins, molds and fungi, feeding inappropriate foodstuffs such as table scraps or leftovers, or being fed large quantities of food. With acute gastritis, most dogs recover in one to three days with supportive treatment, which includes a short period of withholding food. The prognosis is usually good, even if the primary cause is not identified.



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Some of the common causes or conditions associated with gastritis in dogs include:

Antibiotics	Fungal infection	Overeating
Anti-inflammatory (esp.NSAIDs)	Gastrinoma or other neoplasia	Pancreatitis
Bacterial infection	Granulomatous gastric disease	Peritonitis
Bilious vomiting syndrome	Heavy metal poisoning	Poisonous plants
Chemical irritants	Hepatic (liver) disease	Pyometra
Chemotherapy	Hypoadrenocorticism (Addison's disease)	Pythium (water molds)
Corticosteroids	Idiopathic (unknown cause) gastritis	Spoiled food
Diabetic ketoacidosis	Immune mediated disease	Stress
Dietary indiscretion	Inflammatory bowel disease	Toxins
Endocrine disease	Intestinal parasites	Uremia

Eosinophilic gastroenteritis
Food allergy
Foreign body

Lymphoplasmacytic gastritis
Mast cell tumor
Mycotoxins (fungal toxins)

Viral infections

How is gastritis diagnosed?



Tests for gastritis may include blood tests, urinalysis, abdominal x-rays, abdominal ultrasound and endoscopy. In acute cases, only minimal diagnostics such as blood and urine tests are required.

"If the gastritis is chronic, more involved testing will be undertaken..."

If the gastritis is chronic, more involved testing will be undertaken to determine the exact cause of your dog's vomiting.

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How is gastritis treated?

Treatment is based on the specific cause. Most acute cases resolve without medical intervention.

Non-medical treatment guidelines for acute gastritis include:

- Withhold food for 24 to 48 hours
- Offer small amounts of water frequently during the first 24 hours (if fluids cannot be given orally without inducing vomiting, seek immediate veterinary treatment).
- If there is no vomiting for 24 hours, feed a small amount of a highly-digestible, low-fat food
- Resume feeding with small meals given frequently (usually about ½ of the normal daily amount of food, divided into 4-6 meals)
- Gradually increase the amount of food over the next two to three days
- If vomiting returns, notify your veterinarian

Medical treatment for dogs with gastritis may include:

- Gastrointestinal protectants – such as sucralfate
- Anti-emetic or anti-vomiting medications – such as metoclopramide
- H2 receptor antagonists – used when stomach ulcers are suspected – examples include cimetidine, ranitidine, nizatidine or famotidine
- Proton pump inhibitor – such as omeprazole – used in severe cases with stomach ulceration

What is the prognosis for gastritis?

The prognosis is good for cases of acute gastritis. For chronic gastritis, the prognosis is based on the exact underlying cause.

*This client information sheet is based on material written by: Ernest Ward, DVM
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