

Feline Pancreatitis

What is it?

Pancreatitis is a disease that is caused by inflammation of the pancreas which is a small but important organ that sits near the stomach. The pancreas produces hormones important in food digestion.

In more severe cases, pancreatitis can also be associated with inflammation of the liver and intestine. When there is inflammation of all three of these organs at the same time, this is known as 'Triaditis'.

Pancreatitis can occur suddenly, which we term 'acute'. Where signs wax and wane, this is known as 'chronic'.

Unfortunately, we do not know the cause or triggers for pancreatitis in cats, it appears to occur spontaneously. It can, however, be secondary to other underlying disease such as inflammatory bowel disease or diabetes.

Clinical Signs:

- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Diarrhoea
- Painful abdomen
- Irritability
- Reduced appetite
- Fever

How do we diagnose it?

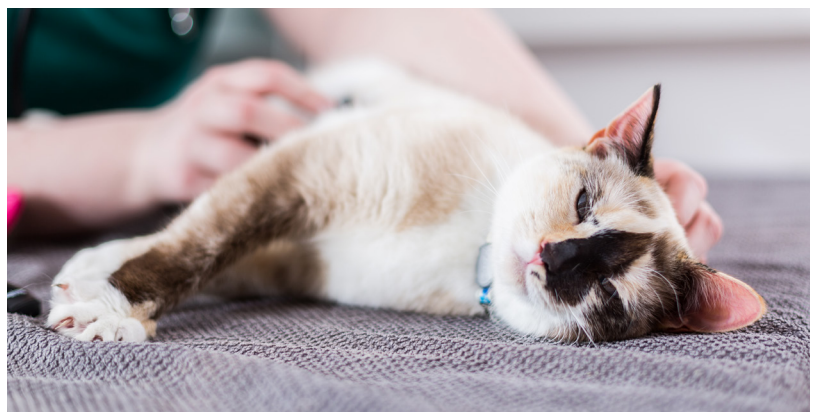
Diagnosis of pancreatitis is based on clinical history, blood test results and imaging of the pancreas, using ultrasonography.



A blood test can be performed to assess the levels of pancreatic lipase enzyme. If high, this indicates the presence of pancreatitis.

What is the treatment?

Treatment for acute pancreatitis is very intensive and often requires admission to hospital. It requires treatment with pain relief, anti-sickness medication, fluid therapy and antibiotics to allow the pancreas to rest and heal. Some patients become so unwell it is necessary to place a feeding tube until they feel well enough to eat of their own accord.

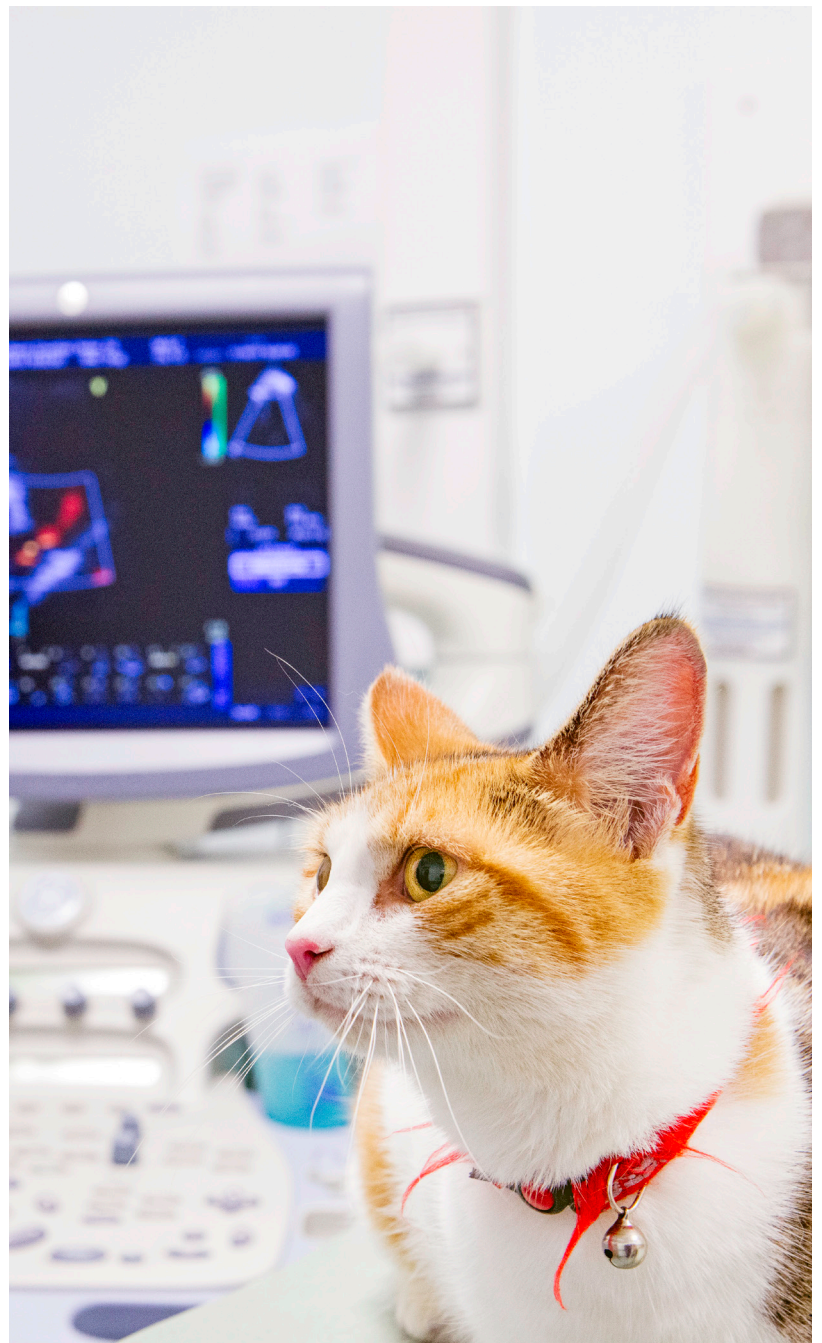


What is the prognosis?

With prompt, intensive therapy, many cats recovery without any long term consequences.

However, if chronic pancreatitis occurs (repeat episodes of pancreatitis), cats can suffer from repeated bouts of illness which can be difficult to diagnose. They can often be managed as outpatients with oral medication. If they lose their appetite or develop a fever, they are admitted to the hospital to begin the treatment described above. One of the concerns we have with repeated damage and injury to the pancreas with chronic pancreatitis is the development of secondary diseases.

Secondary diseases include diabetes, as the pancreas produces insulin and when damaged can no longer do so. Exocrine Pancreatitis Insufficiency (EPI) is another condition that is a possibility when the pancreas becomes unable to assist in food digestion which requires treatment with an enzyme supplement.



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If you are worried about your cat's health, or want to discuss treatment options, give us a call to make an appointment.