

Colitis in Cats

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Colitis describes an inflammation of the colon. The cause may be bacteria, stress, parasites, etc. However, there is usually no detectable reason for the inflammation.

What are the symptoms?

Most cats with colitis look and feel normal. They simply have frequent mucous and occasional flecks of blood in their feces. In severe cases, vomiting may occur. Some cats will experience severe pain when defecating because of inflammation of the colon, and may actually try and stop the defecation process, resulting in constipation. There may be constipation or diarrhea, but invariably there will be an abnormal defecation process.

What are the risks?

Most cats have no serious health risk. When deep ulceration of the colon develops, the situation is more serious.

What is the management?



A rectal exam coupled with a biopsy of the colon wall will generally confirm a diagnosis. Fecal exams for parasites such as giardia should be performed in all cases. Bland diets will help the colon rest and heal. Sometimes, the cat must be placed on a bland, easily digestible diet for the rest of his life. Antibiotics will help control bacterial causes. Sulfa-containing drugs can be used long-term to control or treat chronic colitis. Azulfidine (sulfasalazine) is one such drug commonly used to control chronic colitis. In some animals, cats especially, steroids such as prednisone may be used.