

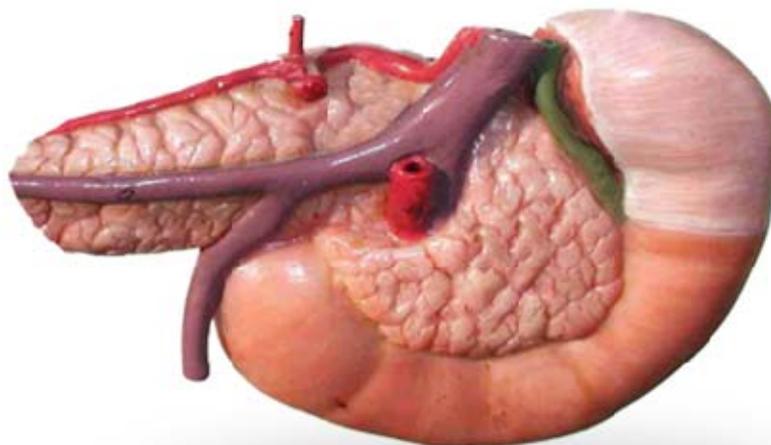
# PANCREATITIS IN DOGS – TREATMENT AND PREVENTION – NATURAL APPROACH

by Dr. Peter Dobias, DVM

Pancreatitis is a very common, sometimes life threatening disease that can be successfully treated or prevented by drug free natural holistic methods.

## PROGRAM SUMMARY:

1. How does the pancreas work?
2. Causes of pancreatitis – holistic point of view.
3. Symptoms.
4. Diagnosis.
5. Less known causes of pancreatitis.
6. Mineral and nutrient deficiencies.
7. **Treatment of pancreatitis – holistic approach**
8. FAQ



## 1. HOW DOES THE PANCREAS WORK?

**The pancreas is both an exocrine (enzymatic) and an endocrine (hormonal) organ.**

**Pancreatic secretion contains enzymes for the digestion of all three major types of food:** proteins, carbohydrates, and fats. Pancreatic juice contains the enzymes trypsinogen, chymotrypsinogen, amylase, and lipase. It also contains sodium bicarbonate, which plays an important role in neutralizing the acidic stomach content that is emptied into the small intestines.

**The Pancreas produces 3 hormones:** glucagon, which raises blood glucose, insulin, which lowers blood glucose; and somatostatin, which inhibits the secretion of insulin, glucagon, and growth hormone from the

anterior pituitary, as well as gastrin from the stomach.

## 2. CAUSES OF PANCREATITIS

From the holistic point of view, pancreatitis (inflammation of the pancreas) is a result of multiple factors. **However, this condition is much more common in dogs on processed kibble.**

**Anatomically dogs are designed for digesting meat, bones, organs with some plant material. Nature never intended dogs to eat a heavily processed grain-based diet.** When processed food is fed, the pancreas simply gets overworked and it becomes inflamed.

The inflammation itself can activate the digestive enzymes prematurely which can trigger the process of pancreas “self digestion”. This can result in leakage of pancreatic enzymes into the abdominal cavity damaging the abdominal lining and other organs. **Because of this, pancreatitis is a serious and often life-threatening condition which needs to be taken seriously.**

## 3. SYMPTOMS

**When processed food is fed, the pancreas simply gets overworked and it becomes inflamed.**

**Acute pancreatitis** is the most serious form, and the onset happens relatively suddenly. Symptoms would include; loss of appetite and vomiting, diarrhea (may or may not be present), and there are usually signs of lethargy, dehydration and the abdomen may appear hardened and sensitive to touch especially in the front portion of the abdomen. The pancreas is closely related to the stomach and is in the same area.

**Chronic pancreatitis** often presents with no symptoms. The only sign of it is a slight elevation of pancreatic enzymes.

## 4. DIAGNOSIS

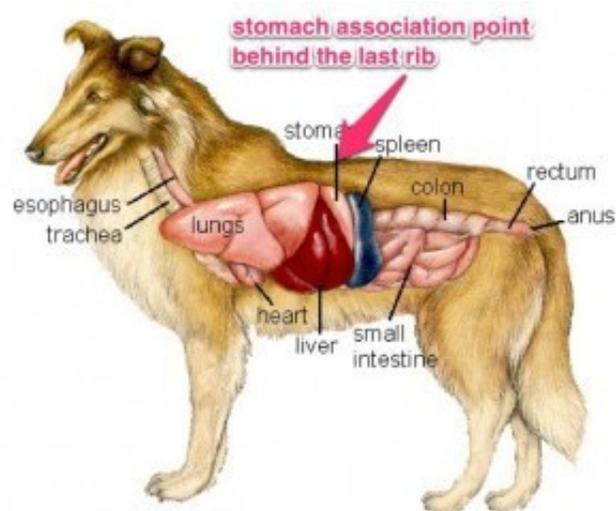
**The best way to confirm your dogs diagnosis is by a blood test which consists of CBC, Chemistry panel and pancreas specific enzyme tests such as lipase.** In recent years, a new test has been introduced called **canine specific lipase** which is usually done separately and is much more reliable than a **simple lipase level**. An ultrasound examination or x-rays may be helpful to confirm the diagnosis and also help rule out other causes of vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain and lethargy.

**In the past few years, I have seen many dogs that were misdiagnosed with pancreatitis,** especially very healthy animals on a natural diet. These individuals tend to have higher healthy levels of pancreatic enzymes and do not have pancreatitis. The reason for this is that most **veterinary labs use reference**

values that are ‘normal’ for animals eating processed food and there is much less understanding of normal values for raw fed dogs.

## 5. LESS KNOWN CAUSES OF PANCREATITIS

- Since I started using and recommending raw and natural un-processed food, the incidence of pancreatitis in my practice has dropped sharply. From my perspective it is obvious that **PROCESSED FOOD** is the most common reason why pancreatitis happens.
- **INJURY that results in energy congestion at the thoracic lumbar junction** is one of the least known but very common causes also. The area, where the thoracic spine transitions into the lumbar spine energetically supplies the stomach and pancreas. When that segment is injured or congested, the pancreas gets weakened and the chances of pancreatitis are much higher.
- To determine that there is a problem in the stomach–pancreas association point, all you need to do is to feel along the region of the spine where the last rib begins and see if there is any sensitivity, increased heat or pain. This area can not only be a predisposing factor for pancreatitis but also for gastric dilation–volvulus, or “bloat”.
- Other possible causes of pancreatitis may be your dog getting into **garbage or feasting on a large amount of aggravating foods**. While some people say that a high-fat diet causes pancreatitis, I see carbohydrates and mainly grain being more common causes.



## 6. MINERAL AND NUTRIENT DEFICIENCIES

This is a very common, frequently underestimated cause that deserves special attention. **No organ can function properly without the presence of essential minerals and other nutrients and pancreas is no exception.**

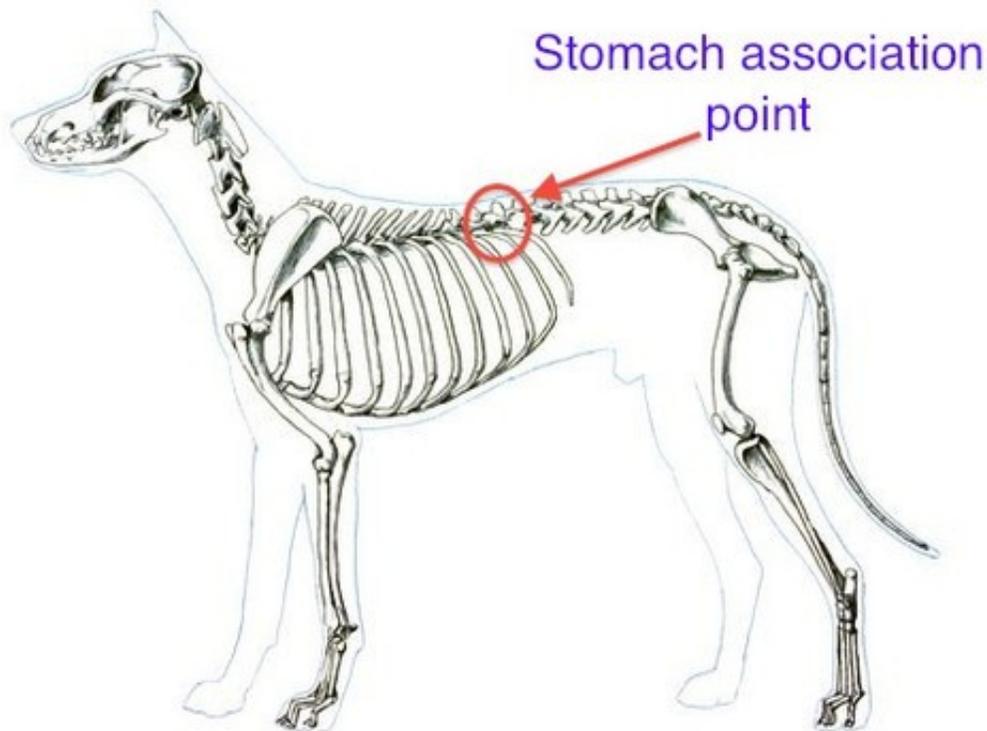
Generally, processed food quality is very low and deficiencies are very common. We live in a time of soils being depleted of minerals because they have been “overused” and nutrients are not returned back to the soil.

**Without minerals, the pancreas cannot function and the body cannot heal.**

## 7. TREATMENT OF PANCREATITIS

The process of treatment of pancreatitis must consist of the following steps:

- Stop feeding processed food because it is not species appropriate. It is in fact the primary cause of pancreatitis. Learn how to feed wholesome natural diet.
- Treat back muscle tightness or injury in the region of thoracic lumbar junction. Ideally see a chiropractor, physiotherapist, osteopath or experienced massage therapist. Monthly treatment repetition is important.



- Fast for at least 48 hours in case of acute pancreatitis because the goal is to rest the pancreas. Most dogs can fast for much longer than a couple of days.
- After the fast, start a mixture of pumpkin or squash and lean meat 50/50 and then introduce a raw or cooked diet.

## 8. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FAQ

### Is IV therapy necessary?

While most textbooks recommend the withdrawing of water completely, I have learned that if the pancreatitis cases are moderate, the steps above should be sufficient and water deprivation and **IV fluid therapy is not needed.**

Your vet may state that the situation is critical and that you can't go wrong with IV therapy. If you do agree on such treatment you should insist that your dog is supervised 24/7 because **there are still clinics that leave hospitalized patients unattended at night which in my opinion is unacceptable.**

### **Are antibiotics necessary?**

I mentioned this before that the most important part of treating any disease is to eliminate what doesn't belong in the body and provide the body with what it needs.

As far as I know, pancreatitis is not caused by antibiotic deficiency. Antibiotics are toxic substances that kill bacteria when necessary but they are also toxic to the body itself including the pancreas. At times of pancreatitis, any additional toxic burden can be detrimental to the treatment outcome. **Pancreatitis is not caused by bacteria.**

Some people advocate that antibiotics have to be used to prevent secondary sepsis or bacterial spread, **I find antibiotics most often detrimental to the outcome of pancreatitis because our goal should be to cleanse and support and not to intoxicate the patient.**

### **How about Metacam?**

Drugs that suppress inflammation like steroids and Metacam **seriously block the body's own efforts to heal because they put the natural defences to sleep.** It is not any different than taking a sleeping pill after finding out that our house has caught on fire. I feel that many more dogs with pancreatitis could be saved if they weren't poisoned in the course of treatment.

### **Is a low protein diet good?**

In my opinion, a high quality protein diet is much better for dogs suffering from pancreatitis than starch, rice or a grain based diet. **I do not recommend low protein food.**

### **How about low fat?**

I do recommend lower fat meats for dogs with pancreatitis. Chicken, turkey, rabbit, eggs are good examples of low fat foods. I do not recommend fatty meats such as duck or lamb. I also do not recommend large animal red meat (beef, buffalo or bison) for dogs with pancreatitis.

**I hope that this article will be the answer to many questions and mainly that it will save many canine lives.**