

NorthPaws

NorthPaws believe in sharing our experiences and learning with others and feel that not only is knowledge regarding your dog's food important for their weight and associated illness but also for internal organ health.

Let's talk Pancreatitis

You may ask me why I am focusing on this in particular well, my boy Percy (Cavapoo) was extremely ill and we nearly lost him at a young age to this condition. I am now determined that all my puppy parents know about this condition to prevent them being in the same situation. I don't know what ultimately caused Percy's pancreatitis however, when reading about it and looking more closely at his food I was amazing at the hidden information some dog food companies fail to share with us.

About pancreatitis:

The pancreas is a small organ that produces enzymes and hormones. The hormones help to control blood sugar levels and the enzymes break down food. These enzymes sometimes activate too early whilst they're still in the pancreas, and can irritate and attack the cells of the pancreas, causing it to become inflamed. This is known as pancreatitis.

Pancreatitis can happen just once, known as acute, or occur several times, known as chronic. Both acute and chronic pancreatitis can be mild or life-threatening.

Pancreatitis is a painful and potentially severe condition caused by the pancreas becoming inflamed. The cause of pancreatitis is often unknown, although eating too much high fat food is a key trigger in many cases. Many dogs recover from pancreatitis, but it can be life-threatening, so needs urgent veterinary treatment. Some affected dogs may develop long-term issues with their pancreas and may need to be fed special diets that are reduced in fat.

Your dog and pancreatitis:

Some dogs are more likely to develop pancreatitis than others: older dogs, overweight dogs, or those that are recovering from surgery can be more prone to pancreatitis. Also some breeds, including Cavalier King Charles Spaniels, Boxers, Border Collies, Cocker Spaniels, Miniature Schnauzers, terriers and other small breeds may also be at increased risk.

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Signs of pancreatitis:

- Not wanting to eat
- Stomach pain (your dog may appear bloated, hunch their back, or lower their front legs and head to ease the pain)
- Being sick
- Having bloody diarrhoea
- Weakness
- High temperature

How to prevent:

The cause of pancreatitis is often unknown, however feeding a lower fat food is a good starting point especially in breeds who have been shown as prone. It is also important that dogs are not given unhealthy table scraps and fatty foods are kept out of paws reach from your dog. Also, feeding a lower fat food will help

Most veterinarians will recommend diets that have low to moderate fat contents. “Low” fat content typically means having a crude fat content of 8% or less. And a “moderate” fat content means the diet may have up to 15% fat on a dry matter basis.

Your dog's food:

Commercial dog food and treat companies report the analysis of their food based on the finished product. What they don't do is give you the dry matter analysis, they do this as without the moisture this seemingly low fat product become a high fat food.

For example:

A raw food shows 10% fat content with 70%: when calculated using the method below, this food actually contains 33% fat.

Calculating the true fat content in your dog's food:

1. Find the percent moisture listed in the guaranteed analysis and subtract that number from 100. This is the percent dry matter for the food.
2. Divide the fat percentage on the label by the percent dry matter for the food and multiply by 100.