

Introduction to Large Intestinal Diseases

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*“Never ignore a gut feeling, but never believe that it’s enough.”
Robert Heller*

CLINICAL IMPORTANCE

Disorders of the large intestine are frequently encountered in veterinary practice. A number of potential causes of acute and chronic large bowel diarrhea (Tables 61-1 and 61-2) must be distinguished from diseases of other organ systems resulting in gastrointestinal signs. Diarrhea associated with large intestinal conditions differs from that associated with small intestinal disorders (Table 55-4). Typical clinical manifestations of large bowel disease include frequent small scanty stools, tenesmus, dyschezia, urgency and passage of mucus and blood. Table 61-3 lists breed-associated large intestinal disorders.

Chapters 62 through 65 include feeding plans for patients with large intestinal disorders including colitis, idiopathic (irritable) bowel syndrome, constipation/obstipation/megacolon and flatulence. Tables in those chapters list the key nutritional factors for such patients as well as tables that compare the levels of key nutritional factors of commercial foods marketed for patients with large intestinal diseases.

Table 61-1. Potential causes of acute large bowel diarrhea in dogs and cats.

Dietary

Dietary indiscretion
Foreign bodies
Garbage toxicity

Drugs

Cyclophosphamide
Doxorubicin

Infectious agents

Bacteria

Campylobacter spp.
Clostridium spp.
Salmonella spp.

Parasites

Giardia lamblia
Trichuris vulpis
Tritrichomonas foetus

Viruses

Panleukopenia
Parvovirus

Miscellaneous

Hemorrhagic gastroenteritis
Colon volvulus

Table 61-2. Potential causes of chronic large bowel diarrhea in dogs and cats.**Infectious causes**

Parasitic

*Giardia lamblia**Trichuris vulpis*

Bacteria

Campylobacter spp.*Salmonella* spp.

Viral

Feline immunodeficiency virus

Feline leukemia virus

Fungal

Histoplasmosis

Pythiosis

Inflammatory bowel disease

Eosinophilic colitis

Lymphocytic colitis

Lymphoplasmacytic colitis

Regional enterocolitis

Suppurative colitis

Dietary (adverse reactions to food)

Food allergy (hypersensitivity)

Food intolerance

Neoplasia

Adenocarcinoma

Adenoma/polyps

Lymphosarcoma

Mast cell tumor

Table 61-3. Breed-associated colonic disorders.**Disorders**

Flatulence

Hemorrhagic gastroenteritis

Irritable bowel syndrome

Ulcerative colitis

Breeds

Brachycephalic dogs and cats

Dachshund, miniature schnauzer,
toy poodle

Working breeds, toy breeds

Boxer, French bulldog