# Feeding guidance for gut disease in dogs and cats

# What is the right food for my dog or cat if they are having vomiting?

If vomiting in small animals is down to a "stomach upset" because they have eaten something they shouldn't have or have a reaction to a certain treat or food, then usually the first step is a bland and easy to digest diet. However, it is important to understand that acute vomiting can be a sign of a more sinister disease, especially if the pet is otherwise unwell, lethargic, has no interest in food, has stomach cramps/ pain. In large breed dogs, unproductive attempts at vomiting or retching can be a sign of a life-threatening disease called gastric dilation volvulus (GDV; "twisted stomach"). If you suspect your dog could have this or shows other concerning signs or vomiting does not stop within 24-48 hours please seek veterinary advice!

If significant disease is ruled out, your vet might decide to give your pet as short course of treatment to feel less nauseous combined with some antacids or stomach protectants. Please do not use any over-the-counter medication for people in your pet, as they can have ingredients that might be harmful or not very helpful.

If a bland diet is sought, this can be either home cooked for a few days (chicken and rice), or a commercial food. Several brands are available as wet and dry food, and your vet can help you with the decision of which one is best for your pet.

# What is the right food for my dog or cat if they are having diarrhoea?

The right food or diet for an animal with diarrhoea is very much dependent on the cause. If harmless causes similar to "stomach upset" are suspected, a bland diet as described above can be appropriate for a few days. If diarrhoea is acute, it is most likely self-limiting. If it does not resolve within a few days or your dog/ cat is otherwise unwell, please seek veterinary assistance! In cases of chronic diarrhoea, so called "intestinal" diets are appropriate for many dogs and cats, as they are easy to digest. For some diagnosed conditions like Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD), hypo- or anti-allergenic foods or so called hydrolysed foods will be recommended and prescribed by your vet. In these circumstances it is very important that you only feed the prescribed diet for the time suggested by your vet and avoid any other food, treat, supplement at all costs! This is because we want to prevent your pet's guts to "react" badly to any ingredients of non-hydrolysed food. There are a number of conditions of the gut that might require different diets. For example with colitis (irritation or inflammation of the large bowel), diets high in fibre might be more appropriate. Again, your vet can guide you with the type of diet required.

# The DIGEST clinic team

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