
Ileus (Gastrointestinal Stasis)

What is GI Stasis?

A syndrome of reduced or absent gut motility and its consequences. Reduced food intake slows the GI tract, which can result in pain, bloating, bacterial imbalances, impaction, and in some cases death.

What causes GI Stasis?

Inappropriate diet, stress, any illness, or any painful condition

Symptoms:

- Decreased appetite
- Decreased fecal production or small fecal pellets
- Lethargy or reluctance to move
- Teeth grinding
- Digging or scratching excessively
- Sitting in a hunched posture
- Drooling/hypersalivation

How is GI stasis diagnosed?

Your veterinarian can diagnose this condition based on history and physical exam findings. Blood work and radiographs are often recommended to determine the severity of the condition and to screen for underlying illness. Additional tests may be indicated on a case-by-case basis.

How is it treated?

Most cases of GI stasis can be treated medically. Your veterinarian will determine the best course of action based on the results of diagnostic testing and physical examination findings. Most patients are treated with fluid therapy, pain medication, GI motility medication, and supplemental syringe feeding

Ingestion of fibrous food is critical to reestablish GI motility. Offer free choice water, fresh hay, and a variety of greens in addition to syringe feeding to encourage self-feeding. Do not give pineapple, pineapple juice, or papaya. This is ineffective and can result in worsening of the GI stasis.

Continue treatment for 3-5 days or as instructed. Most patients will start eating and passing stool within 24-48 hours of treatment. If your pet is not responding to treatment contact your veterinarian immediately.

How can I prevent GI Stasis?

Feed your pet an appropriate diet. Offer unlimited, good-quality, high-fiber grass or timothy hay, a moderate amount of fresh leafy greens, minimal pellets, and no or only occasional treats.