

## FACT SHEET

### Colitis

#### The colon

The large intestine consists of the caecum, the colon and the rectum. The colon is situated between the caecum and the rectum.

No significant food digestion or absorption occurs in the colon, this occurs almost entirely within the small intestine. The colon's primary function is the transportation of undigested food and the absorption of water and electrolytes. The colon does, however, have the ability to partially digest some of the protein and fibre residue using the large bacterial population that is always present within it. Any residue left undigested after passing through the colon is stored in the rectum as faeces before being evacuated through the anus.

#### What is colitis?

Colitis means inflammation of the colon, but usually involves the rectum as well. It can occur in all breeds and at any age, but breeds especially susceptible are the golden retriever, rough collie and Shetland sheepdog. When colitis occurs there is a reduction in the amount of water and electrolytes being absorbed in the colon before entering the rectum. The rectum is therefore unable to store the watery faeces, which will result in urgent defecation.

Colitis can occur for many reasons; the most common causes are stress, allergic reaction or intolerance to certain food substances, parasite infestation or growths. In many cases the cause remains unknown.

#### Signs and symptoms

The symptoms of colitis can vary considerably depending on the severity of the problem. The stools may be jelly-like in texture and can contain mucous and fresh blood; diarrhoea is common with consistency varying from soft to complete liquid or a mixture of both. Often stools are passed much more frequently than usual and sometimes with a great deal of pain and discomfort. In extreme cases vomiting will occur and severe abdominal pain will be present. If symptoms persist, weight loss will eventually occur.

#### How can Naturediet help?

It is now recognised that diet is a very important factor in the management of colitis.

For dogs, a large percentage of chronic cases will actually respond to a high fibre diet. Fibre improves the consistency of the food and slows down the speed of digested food, passing through the colon. This provides more time for the water and electrolytes to be absorbed, resulting in a better faecal consistency.

All Naturediet products contain an inclusion of dietary fibre to improve the environment for bowel bacteria, improving digestion and therefore faecal consistency.

Naturediet Senior/Lite however, has an elevated amount of added fibre and would therefore be an excellent diet to choose if your pet is prone to this problem.

Senior/Lite should not, however, be fed to puppies or junior dogs as their calorific value is higher than an adult dog during the growth stage of their life. We have also produced a food specifically for dogs that have a sensitivity problem. Naturediet Sensitive can certainly assist in the alleviation of the symptoms of colitis.

It is possible in some cases that the cause of colitis is due to an allergy or intolerance to one or more of the additives used in most modern day proprietary pet foods. If you suspect this to be the cause of your pet's complaint, then feeding from our Naturediet range can help to cure the problem. Naturediet contains no additives, preservatives, flavourings, colourings or processing aids and with no wheat, barley, maize or soya products, the risk of gluten-associated intolerance is greatly reduced.

This document is the copyright of Naturediet Pet Foods Ltd and may not be reproduced in part or in full without the permission of Naturediet Pet Food Ltd.

We care what goes into our food, because you care what goes into your pet