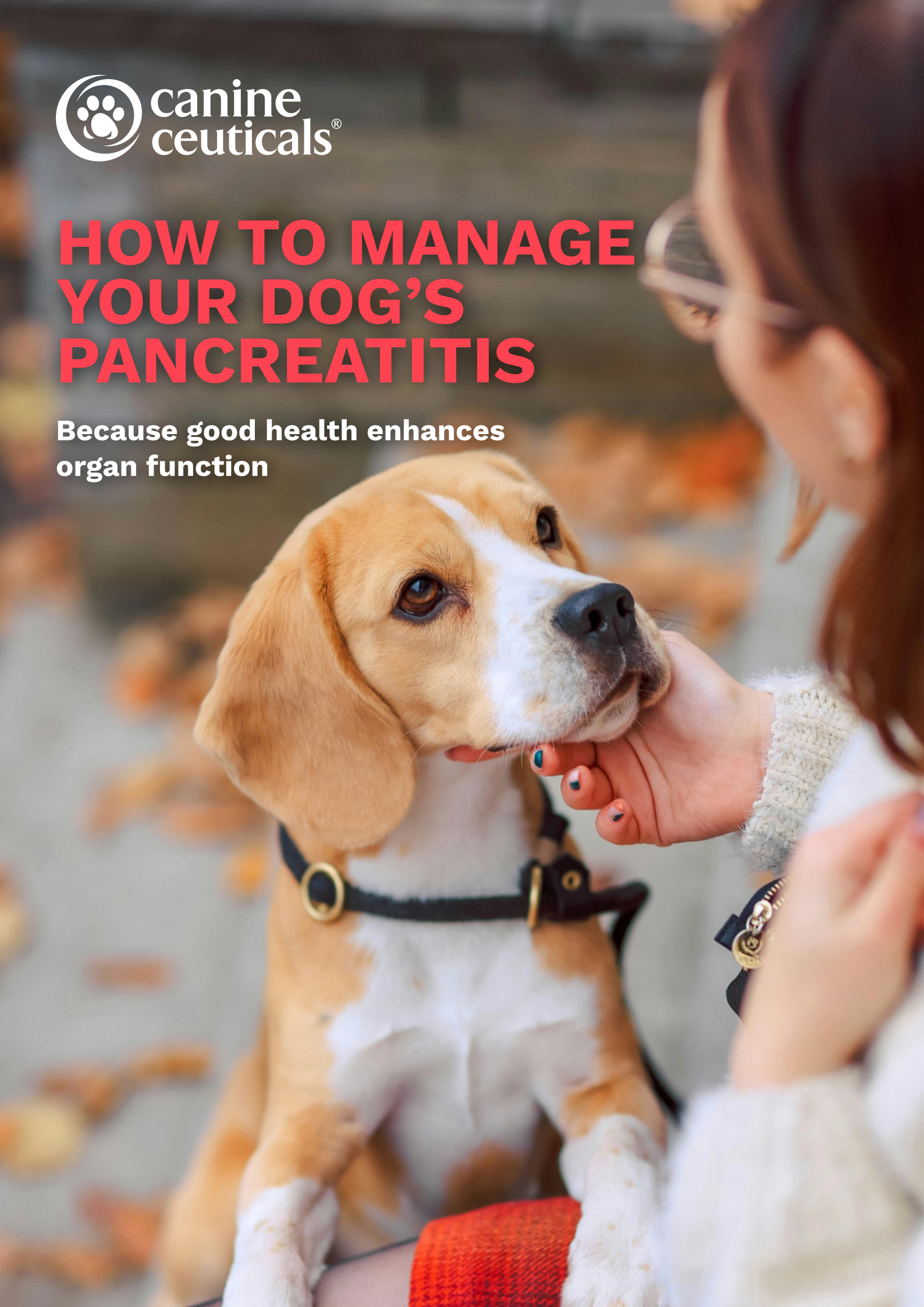




HOW TO MANAGE YOUR DOG'S PANCREATITIS

**Because good health enhances
organ function**



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**“The care we give
to our dogs today
decides their health
tomorrow.”**

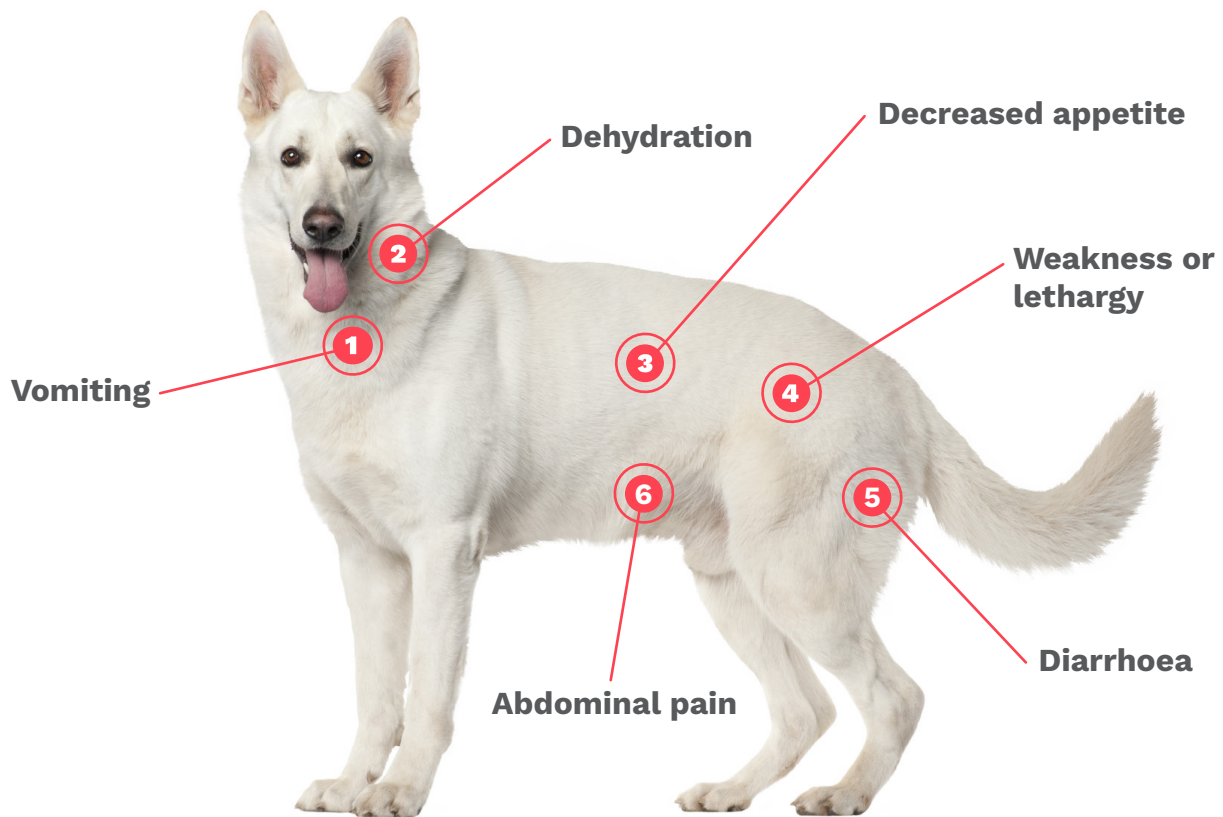
Navigating pancreatitis in your dog can feel daunting, especially when flare-ups seem to appear without warning. Pancreatitis – or inflammation of the pancreas, can occur acutely or develop as a chronic, smouldering condition, disrupting the organ’s essential role in digesting fats, proteins, and carbohydrates, and in regulating blood sugar.

When the pancreas becomes inflamed, its digestive enzymes can begin damaging its own tissue, leading to symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain and tenderness, loss of appetite, lethargy, or changes in stool (i.e., diarrhoea). Some dogs show only subtle signs, such as restlessness after meals, decreased appetite, or a hunched posture, while others develop severe symptoms requiring hospitalisation. Because these signs overlap with other gastrointestinal conditions, diagnosis can be challenging, especially in the early stages.

Pancreatitis can range from mild and self-limiting to severe and life-threatening. Recovery often depends on how quickly inflammation is controlled, how gently the digestive system is supported, and whether underlying triggers, such as high-carbohydrate and high-fat foods, obesity, endocrine disorders, or certain medications, are identified and managed. Understanding what causes pancreatic inflammation, how nutrition, hydration and oxidative stress influence recovery, and which gentle, evidence-informed supplements can help protect and restore pancreatic function makes a meaningful difference to both short- and long-term outcomes.

In this guide, we’ll explore what pancreatitis is and how it’s diagnosed, then outline clear, practical strategies to help you manage it at home, including nutritional guidance, hydration support, and natural adjuncts that can complement your veterinarian’s care. With early recognition, consistent management, and the right integrative supports, most dogs can regain comfort, stability, and quality of life, and you’ll feel more confident navigating each stage of their recovery.

Common signs your dog is suffering from pancreatitis



Pancreatitis may occur as a sudden (acute) episode or develop more gradually into a persistent (chronic) condition. Dogs with acute pancreatitis usually show more severe, sudden clinical signs, while those with chronic pancreatitis tend to experience milder, often intermittent symptoms.

- 1 Vomiting:** When the pancreas becomes inflamed, it releases chemical signals that irritate nearby organs and nerves in the abdomen. This irritation, along with changes in digestion and pain, sends signals to the brain's vomiting centre, triggering nausea and vomiting.
- 2 Dehydration:** Dehydration can occur due to vomiting, diarrhoea, poor appetite, and fluid loss from inflammation.
- 3 Decreased appetite:** Dogs with pancreatitis often have reduced appetite due to the combined effects of pain, inflammation, nausea, and altered digestion.
- 4 Weakness or lethargy:** Widespread inflammation can lead to weakness, lethargy, and even shock in some cases.
- 5 Diarrhoea:** Approximately one-third of dogs will also experience diarrhoea or melena (dark, tarry-looking stool that contains digested blood).
- 6 Abdominal pain:** Abdominal pain may be subtle or hard to recognise at first, but in more severe cases it can appear as marked discomfort. For example, adopting a 'prayer position' (front legs lowered, hind end raised), or showing signs of restlessness and agitation.

Factors that may contribute to pancreatitis

Pancreatitis in dogs is often described as idiopathic, not because it lacks an underlying cause, but because the possible contributing factors are not yet fully understood or well-studied. Several potential risk factors are outlined below:

High-Fat or Indiscriminate Diet: Consumption of fatty meals, table scraps, unusual food items, or garbage is one of the most common triggers. Excess dietary fat overstimulates pancreatic enzyme release and can cause premature enzyme activation within the pancreas, leading to inflammation.

Medications: Certain drugs, including corticosteroids, azathioprine, potassium bromide, phenobarbital, and some chemotherapy agents, have been associated with pancreatitis in dogs, either by altering fat metabolism or by directly affecting pancreatic tissue.

Metabolic Disorders: Conditions such as Cushing's disease, diabetes mellitus, and hypothyroidism can predispose dogs to pancreatitis by disrupting enzyme regulation or promoting fat accumulation in the blood.

Obesity: Overweight dogs have a 1.3x increased risk for the development of acute pancreatitis.

Genetic or Breed Predisposition: Certain breeds, particularly miniature schnauzers, miniature poodles, cocker spaniels, and some terriers, are genetically predisposed, likely due to inherited lipid metabolism abnormalities.

Trauma or Surgery: A history of previous surgery is associated with an increased risk of developing pancreatitis. This may be due to exposure to anaesthetic drugs, physical trauma to the pancreas during surgery, or reduced blood flow (hypoperfusion) to the pancreas while under anaesthesia.

Miscellaneous Causes: Several other potential risk factors have been suggested, including neuter status, certain infectious diseases (i.e. *Babesia spp.*, *Leishmania infantum*), as well as hepatitis, and insect or snake envenomation.

In many dogs, no single cause is identified. Pancreatitis often results from a combination of genetic susceptibility, diet, metabolic stress, and environmental factors acting together. Identifying which of the above factors may apply to your dog can help guide targeted prevention for pancreatic health, for example, by maintaining a balanced, low-fat diet, ensuring good hydration, managing weight and endocrine disorders, minimising exposure to pancreatic irritants (such as certain medications or high-fat treats), and addressing infections or metabolic issues early.

The good news is that there's strong scientific evidence supporting the use of high-quality supplements to help protect pancreatic function, reduce inflammation, and support long-term digestive wellbeing.

Let's begin by exploring the primary, fundamental methods you can implement to support your dog's pancreatic health.

Diagnosis of pancreatitis in dogs

Diagnosing pancreatitis in dogs can be challenging because the signs, such as vomiting, loss of appetite, lethargy, abdominal pain, or diarrhoea, are common to many other diseases. Veterinarians usually start with a thorough history and physical examination, looking for risk factors (such as diet, medications, or prior episodes).

Pancreatic-specific blood tests are often required, such as the canine pancreatic lipase immunoreactivity (cPLI) test, which measures pancreatic enzyme levels in the blood and is currently considered one of the most accurate non-invasive diagnostic tools. Serum trypsin-like immunoreactivity (TLI) is also sometimes tested, although it is not overly reliable in cases of chronic pancreatitis where there is a loss of pancreatic tissue mass, as this causes a reduction in TLI.

Abdominal ultrasound is also commonly used to visualise the pancreas and check for swelling, changes in surrounding fat, or fluid accumulation, although subtle or early cases can still be missed. In severe or unclear cases, computed tomography (CT) scans or biopsy may be performed, but these are less common in general practice. This is because CT scans require prolonged anaesthesia, and biopsies are incredibly invasive and may aggravate the condition.

Because no single test is perfect, vets often rely on a combination of clinical signs, laboratory results, and imaging findings to make a confident diagnosis.





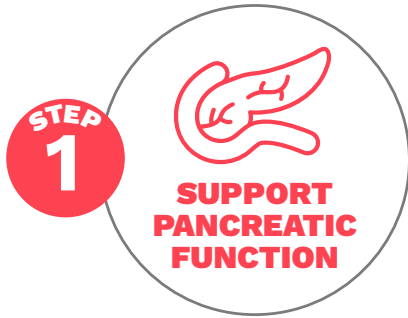
Pancreatic Support Starts Here

Pancreatitis management in dogs aims to slow its progression, manage symptoms, and maintain a good quality of life. Mild cases can recover within a few days with supportive care, but severe or chronic cases may have long-term complications like diabetes or digestive issues. The focus should be on supporting the dog through the acute episode and managing the condition with targeted care to prevent future flare-ups and improve the dog's comfort and longevity.

We've developed a targeted 3-step support plan to help slow disease progression and improve your dog's quality of life:*



*Pet owners should always seek the guidance of their veterinarian as the first step when their pet displays any concerning symptoms. Only a qualified veterinarian can provide a formal diagnosis and recommend appropriate treatment options tailored to the specific needs of your pet.



Organic Beef Pancreas

Organic Beef Pancreas may provide valuable nutritional and functional support for dogs recovering from or managing pancreatitis. The pancreas produces digestive enzymes, i.e., lipase, amylase, and protease, that break down fats, carbohydrates, and proteins. In pancreatitis, enzyme secretion is impaired or painful, leading to maldigestion, nutrient loss, and gastrointestinal inflammation.

Supplementing with freeze-dried pancreas provides these enzymes in their natural form, helping to reduce the workload on the dog's own pancreas and improve nutrient absorption while minimising further irritation.

Studies on exogenous pancreatic enzyme supplementation in dogs with exocrine pancreatic insufficiency (EPI) and chronic pancreatitis demonstrate improved clinical outcomes, including better stool quality and weight gain.





Milk Thistle

Milk Thistle (*Silybum marianum*) can provide valuable supportive benefits for dogs with pancreatitis due to its potent hepatoprotective, antioxidant, and anti-inflammatory properties. The active complex in Milk Thistle, known as silymarin, helps protect liver cells from oxidative damage and promotes regeneration of hepatocytes, supporting the liver's role in detoxification and fat metabolism – a key consideration since liver dysfunction and impaired fat metabolism can worsen pancreatic inflammation.

By improving bile flow and lipid processing, Milk Thistle may help reduce metabolic strain on both the liver and pancreas, particularly in dogs recovering from pancreatitis or with concurrent liver involvement. In addition, silymarin's antioxidant activity reduces systemic oxidative stress and inflammatory cytokine production, which can help mitigate secondary inflammation in the pancreas and surrounding tissues.



Palmitoylethanolamide (P.E.A)

P.E.A has not yet been formally studied in dogs with pancreatitis, but evidence from related research corroborates its potential as a supportive anti-inflammatory and analgesic adjunct. P.E.A acts on the endocannabinoid system, particularly through PPAR- α activation, to downregulate inflammatory mediators, reduce mast-cell activation, and modulate pain and immune responses. These mechanisms may help mitigate pancreatic and systemic inflammation associated with pancreatitis.

Experimental studies in rodents have shown that P.E.A can reduce intestinal and visceral inflammation and protect pancreatic islets from inflammatory damage in diabetic models, suggesting a potential role in supporting pancreatic health.

While direct research on P.E.A in canine pancreatitis is lacking, its proven safety and broad anti-inflammatory actions make it a promising complementary option for managing inflammation and discomfort in affected dogs, alongside veterinary-directed treatment.



Omega-3 Support

Omega-3 fatty acids, particularly EPA and DHA from marine sources, can be helpful for dogs with pancreatitis because they naturally reduce inflammation in the pancreas and throughout the body. Pancreatitis involves the release of inflammatory enzymes that damage pancreatic tissue, and omega-3s help dampen these inflammatory pathways, leading to less tissue irritation and improved comfort.

They may also support healthier blood-fat levels, which is important because high blood lipids (hyperlipidaemia) can trigger or worsen pancreatitis in some dogs. Studies in both humans and animals show that omega-3s lower inflammatory markers and improve lipid metabolism, which may indirectly help reduce the risk of flare-ups and support recovery.

While omega-3s are not a treatment on their own, they are a gentle, evidence-supported addition that can help stabilise inflammation and support overall pancreatic health alongside a low-fat diet and veterinary care.





Gut support can be helpful for dogs with pancreatitis because it improves digestive regulation, reduces intestinal inflammation, and stabilises stool quality. Some beneficial ingredients include:

- Psyllium husk provides soluble fibre that slows gastric emptying and improves stool consistency, which can help reduce intestinal irritation often seen alongside pancreatitis.
- DigeZyme® enzyme blend (including amylase, protease, lipase, cellulase and lactase) helps improve nutrient digestion and reduce the workload on the gastrointestinal tract, important when the pancreas is inflamed, and enzyme output may be impaired.
- Lactospore® (*Bacillus coagulans*) is a heat-stable probiotic shown to reduce gut inflammation, enhance short-chain fatty acid production, and support microbiome balance.
- Chamomile and fennel have soothing, antispasmodic properties that may help reduce nausea, cramping, and digestive discomfort.
- Larch arabinogalactan and inulin act as prebiotics that fuel beneficial bacteria and support gut-barrier integrity, helping reduce systemic inflammatory load - an important consideration in pancreatitis, where gut permeability and microbial imbalance are common secondary issues.

Together, these ingredients help stabilise digestion, support the gut environment, and reduce digestive strain in dogs recovering from pancreatitis.



Diet: The most critical component of pancreatic care

A dietary plan for dogs recovering from pancreatitis should begin with a strictly low-fat, highly digestible diet, but only during the initial acute phase when the pancreas is inflamed (generally 7-14 days), and the dog may be experiencing nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, or diarrhoea. During this early period, reducing fat intake decreases the need for pancreatic enzyme secretion and can shorten the duration of clinical signs. Lean, gently cooked proteins such as skinless chicken breast, turkey breast, kangaroo, white fish, or cottage cheese work well at this stage. However, once vomiting has resolved and stools have stabilised, dogs should not remain on a very low-fat diet indefinitely. Long-term fat restriction can deprive the body of essential fatty acids, contribute to dry skin,

impair fat-soluble vitamin absorption, and may even hinder pancreatic healing. Instead, after the first couple of weeks of stability (and in consultation with your vet), dogs should be able to transition to a slightly higher fat, minimally processed, fresh-food diet, gradually reintroducing healthy fats, particularly anti-inflammatory omega-3s, while avoiding highly processed, oxidised, or heat-damaged fats.

Equally important is the type of carbohydrate used. Highly refined or high-starch carbohydrates (such as white rice, which is rapidly digested and offers poor micronutrient density) are not ideal for pancreatitis recovery. Instead of relying on rice or other high-glycaemic fillers, it is better to use low-starch vegetables (zucchini, spinach, celery, carrot, broccoli, cauliflower), which provide fibre, phytonutrients, and antioxidants without the metabolic burden of fast sugars or fermentable starches. These vegetables can be lightly steamed or finely chopped to aid digestion. Dogs with pancreatitis benefit from moist, fresh foods, so adding hydration through warm water, bone broth (with fat removed), or lightly cooked vegetables is helpful.

The level of processing is important, too. High-temperature processing used in kibble production generates advanced glycation end products (AGEs) and advanced lipoxidation end products (ALEs), compounds linked to oxidative stress and inflammation in both humans and animals. Because the pancreas is especially sensitive to oxidative damage, diets emphasising fresh, gently cooked or raw ingredients tend to be less inflammatory and easier on the digestive system. Feeding small, frequent meals (3–4 per day) further reduces pancreatic workload.

Dietary Fat Guidance for Dogs with Pancreatitis

Every dog with pancreatitis has a different level of fat they can comfortably tolerate, so the goal is always to find the sweet spot that keeps your dog feeling well while still meeting their nutritional needs. As a general guide, many dogs recovering from pancreatitis do best on a diet that is low in fat, especially in the early stages.

A commonly used safe upper limit is no more than about 10% fat on a dry matter basis (DM). This is considered a ‘low-fat’ diet and is appropriate for most dogs in recovery or those who are prone to flare-ups.

Once a dog is stable and doing well, some can transition to a diet containing 10–15% fat DM. This range is often used for long-term management when the dog has shown they can handle a little more dietary fat without symptoms.

For dogs at higher risk, such as those with recurrent pancreatitis, high blood fats (hyperlipidaemia), or those who show even mild flare-ups with dietary changes, an ultra-low-fat diet may be needed. These typically contain 10% fat DM or less, with some therapeutic diets sitting closer to 7% fat DM.

Because pancreatitis varies widely between dogs in severity, triggers and recovery, there is no one-size-fits-all approach to dietary fat levels. Your dog’s ideal level will depend on things like their history, body condition, and any other health concerns. Adjusting the fat level slowly, while monitoring symptoms, is the safest way to find what works best for your dog.

Quick Guide to Fat Levels in Pancreatitis Diets

Diet Type	Fat Level	When It's Used
Ultra-low-fat diet	≤ 10% fat DM (sometimes as low as 7% DM or ~14-20 g fat/1,000kcal)	Dogs with hyperlipidaemia, repeated pancreatitis episodes, or high sensitivity to dietary fat
Low-fat diet	~10% fat DM (<20 g fat/1,000kcal)	Most dogs during recovery or when prone to flare-ups
Moderate-fat diet	10–15% fat DM (~25–30 g fat/1,000 kcal)	Dogs who are stable and have shown they can tolerate a little more fat

If home-preparing, keep it balanced

If you prefer to home-prepare your dog's meals, this can be a deeply rewarding way to nourish your dog - but it must be done with care. Dogs have very specific nutrient requirements, and over time, imbalances can develop if meals are not properly formulated. To ensure nutritional adequacy, it's strongly recommended to:

- Use a recipe formulated by a qualified (veterinary) nutritionist or a meal-balancer designed for home-prepared diets to prevent nutrient gaps over time. Our recommendation for dogs with pancreatitis is The Veterinary Nutrition Group's low-fat diet recipe <https://www.vngpets.com/pages/feeding-guide-for-dogs-needing-a-low-fat-diet> combined with their 'CompleteMe Hypo Canine' meal balancer (<https://www.vngpets.com/products/completeme-hypo-canine>).
- Rotate suitable proteins and low-glycaemic vegetables (as directed for pancreatitis and your dog's specific needs) and include omega-3 fats as advised by your vet.
- Transition gradually over 5–10 days (or longer): start by replacing a small portion of the usual food and increase slowly while watching stools, appetite, and energy.

Once the dog is clinically stable and comfortable, the goal is a species-appropriate, fresh, moderate-fat, low-carbohydrate diet rich in antioxidants and high-quality proteins. The long-term aim is not to suppress fat intake entirely, but to provide healthy, minimally processed fats in amounts the dog can tolerate while avoiding heavy, oxidised, heat-damaged, or highly processed foods. With careful reintroduction of appropriate fats, continued avoidance of high-starch fillers, and an emphasis on fresh nutrition, most dogs can return to a balanced, enjoyable diet that supports both pancreatic health and overall wellbeing.

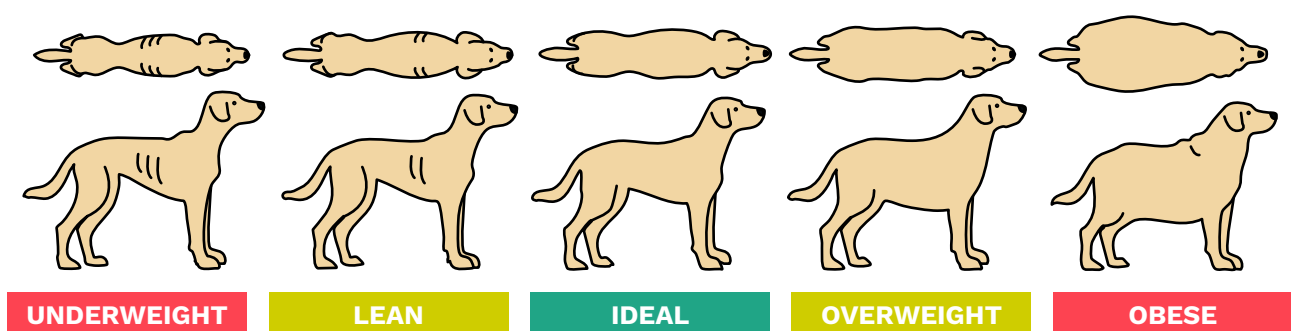
Lifestyle & Environment are Equally Important

In addition to diet and supplements, it's imperative to implement some practical lifestyle adjustments to support your dog. These complement dietary management and can make a meaningful difference in reducing flare-ups, supporting recovery, and protecting the pancreas long-term.

Practical lifestyle measures to support your dog with pancreatitis

- **Keep exercise gentle and consistent:** Avoid vigorous or high-intensity exercise, especially after meals. Running, rough play, and ball-chasing can increase abdominal pressure and trigger nausea or discomfort. Instead, focus on slow sniff-walks, calm enrichment at home, and short, frequent outings rather than long sessions.
- **Strictly avoid high-fat treats and table scraps:** Even tiny amounts of highly fatty foods, such as cheese, meats with skin, sausages, peanut butter, jerky, marrow bones, or leftovers, can trigger a pancreatitis flare. Make sure everyone in the household knows this rule. Guests often cause accidental flare-ups.
- **Manage stress and excitement:** Stress increases cortisol, gut irritation, and inflammatory signalling, all of which can worsen pancreatitis. Support calmer routines by keeping predictable daily schedules, avoiding overstimulation (e.g. chaotic play, loud environments), offering quiet rest areas away from household traffic, using calming supplements or routines where appropriate. Dogs recovering from pancreatitis often need far more rest than usual.
- **Promote hydration throughout the day:** Pancreatitis can increase dehydration risk. Encourage moisture intake by adding warm water or low-fat bone broth to meals and offering multiple water bowls. Hydration supports digestion, reduces constipation, and helps the pancreas recover.
- **Feed small, frequent meals:** Large meals increase pancreatic stimulation and can trigger pain or nausea. Feed 3-4 smaller meals per day during recovery and avoid long fasting periods (unless your dog is vomiting, and it's performed under vet guidance). This keeps blood sugar stable and supports digestive comfort.
- **Maintain a healthy weight:** Excess body fat increases systemic inflammation and predisposes dogs to pancreatitis. Aim for a lean body condition score:
 - Visible waist
 - Easily felt ribs without pressing
 - No abdominal pot belly

Weight reduction must be done gradually and safely.



- **Avoid unnecessary medications that stress the gut:** Certain drugs (e.g., corticosteroids, some NSAIDs, certain antibiotics) can worsen gut inflammation or affect pancreatic function. Always check with your vet before adding new medications, supplements, or worming treatments.
- **Provide plenty of rest during recovery:** Even if your dog seems brighter after a few days, the pancreas requires weeks to fully settle. Ensure they receive plenty of sleep, provide warm, comfortable bedding, limit visitors and/or stimulation, and handle them gently, as abdominal pain may linger. Recovery is often slower internally than externally.
- **Introduce dietary changes very slowly:** Dogs with pancreatitis are highly sensitive to changes in fat content or processing level. Any new protein, fat source, or treat should be introduced over several days while monitoring stools and energy.
- **Watch for early warning signs of a flare:** Catching a flare early prevents hospitalisation. Look out for:
 - Lip licking
 - Stretching in a ‘prayer position’
 - Vomiting or gagging
 - Sudden refusal to eat
 - Soft stools or diarrhoea
 - Hunched posture
 - Quietness or reluctance to move.

If these appear, rest the gut, reduce fat intake, and contact your vet.





If you are looking for further bespoke support, we offer health consultation services for dogs, designed to meet the varying needs of pet owners and their companions. These consultations are available after a veterinary diagnosis has been provided.

These custom health consultations come with an option to purchase individual tailored herbal tonics. A Custom Blend is the perfect approach to more specifically target your dog's health needs and concerns.

How to Manage Aging in Senior Dogs

Discover how to help your canine companion age with comfort, vitality and confidence with our guide for senior dog parents. This practical, science-backed resource walks you through the real signs of ageing, the most common senior health challenges, and how to support mobility, cognition and immunity through targeted nutrition and evidence-based supplements.

From joint health and brain support to immune resilience and senior-appropriate diet tips, this guide empowers pet parents to improve quality of life and make informed, holistic choices for their dog's golden years.



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CanineCeuticals® provides a premium, human-grade supplement range for dogs. We fuse ancient traditional medicine with the latest scientific evidence to create the most effective health solutions for your pet.

Created by an accredited Clinical Naturopath, Nutritionist and Herbalist, CanineCeuticals® offers a more holistic approach to supporting the core health of your dog to ensure they receive the best health outcome possible.

CanineCeuticals® uses human-grade ingredients (locally sourced in Australia wherever possible) to create pet-friendly oral powders, oral liquids and soft gel capsules.

We believe that good health starts from the inside out, which is why we provide full support for your dog's foundational health across all life stages.

Our range of products targets everything from allergy support to digestive health, joint health, emotional wellbeing, immune support, general health and wellness, nutritional support, and even liquid herbal solutions. With our full ingredient transparency, you can rest assured that your pet is getting the best possible care.



References available on request.



Narelle Cooke, accredited Clinical Naturopath, Nutritionist and Herbalist - Founder of CanineCeuticals®

I created CanineCeuticals® out of a deep passion for the health and wellbeing of our pets.

As a devoted pet parent to three French Bulldogs, a Rottweiler, and a Burmese cat, I wanted nothing more than to see my own animals live their happiest, healthiest, and longest lives.

But like many pet owners, I became increasingly frustrated and disheartened by the quality of products on the market. Too often, they were made with substandard ingredients and packed with artificial colours, flavours, and preservatives - additives that don't serve our pets' long-term health or vitality.

And so, CanineCeuticals® was born - a brand built on integrity, transparency, and a genuine commitment to helping our pets thrive.



Healthcare that
you would expect
for yourself.



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