**Feline Specialties Veterinary Hospital**

**Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD)**

There are few things more frustrating than having a cat that is suffering chronic bouts of vomiting and diarrhea. Vomiting and diarrhea cause dehydration, and if left untreated, can become a life-threatening situation. Therefore, any cat displaying those signs should be examined by a veterinarian. There are many possible causes of vomiting and diarrhea, but IBD is a common cause of gastrointestinal problems in the cat. Although cats of any age can be affected, middle-aged to older cats are more susceptible.

IBD describes a group of chronic gastrointestinal disorders. Microscopically the disease is characterized by the infiltration of inflammatory cells into the lining of the digestive tract. The cause of IBD is unknown.

**Diagnosis**

To rule out other causes of gastrointestinal disease, we will perform diagnostic tests that include a complete blood count and serum chemistries. Many cats with IBD have concurrent pancreatitis and low Vitamin B12 levels and we often will test for both of these along with the serum chemistries. In addition, we may take x-rays or perform an ultrasound evaluation of the abdomen.

The most definitive of the diagnostic tests is the microscopic examination of small pieces of the intestine (biopsies). These tissue samples can be obtained during an abdominal surgery (laparotomy). Over time, IBD can progress to the intestinal cancer, lymphoma.

**Treatment**

A combination of dietary management and medical therapy can be used to successfully manage IBD in most cats. Because there is no single best treatment, we may need to try several different combinations in order to determine the best therapy for your cat.

**Dietary Management**

Sensitivity to food antigens contributes to the gastrointestinal inflammation in some cats, so a change in diet often provides symptomatic relief. Several balanced prescription diets have been advocated as effective in treating IBD, such as Purina EN and Royal Canin Gastrointestinal Diet.

**Medical Management**

Corticosteroids are commonly used to treat cats with IBD. These drugs have potent anti-inflammatory and immunosuppressive properties with relatively few side effects in cats. Additionally, corticosteroids may stimulate the appetite and enhance intestinal water absorption.

Antibiotics, such as metronidazole, can be helpful when combinations of dietary management and corticosteroid therapy have failed to adequately control the disease. Side effects to metronidazole are uncommon. Excessive salivation is a common reaction of cats after receiving the pill due to the unpleasant taste.

**Prognosis**

It is rarely possible to cure inflammatory bowel disease, but most cases can be satisfactorily controlled by medication and diet. Relapses can occur if the treatment regimen is not followed completely.

Prednisolone Dosage Regimen:

Give\_\_\_\_\_tablets by mouth once daily for\_\_\_\_\_days.

Next, decrease the dose to\_\_\_\_\_\_tablets once daily for\_\_\_\_\_days.

You will need a recheck exam in\_\_\_\_\_days to evaluate your cat’s weight and symptoms.