

## Helping Your Dog After IBD

**Once your dog's inflammatory bowel disease is in remission, the right diet and supplements can keep him healthy and comfortable.**

*By Shawn Messonnier, DVM*

Most dogs diagnosed with inflammatory bowel disease can be successfully treated at home with minimal use of immunosuppressive drugs, such as corticosteroids. A rational combination of the proper diet plus gastrointestinal-supporting supplements will keep your dog in remission for a long time.

Finding the proper diet is important to minimize inflammation in the gastrointestinal system. There is no one ideal diet for the dog with IBD. Initially, a low-fat, low-residue diet (a bland diet that contains increased carbohydrates and protein, plus additional fiber) is often prescribed at the time of diagnosis.

Once the dog is stabilized, slowly introduce a high-quality, natural dog food by gradually mixing it with the bland diet over time. The goal is to be able to eliminate the bland diet over a period of one to two weeks while keeping your dog in remission.

Any protein source can be used. Commonly chosen diets contain chicken, turkey, lamb, venison or rabbit. Many dogs with IBD do better with a reduced-gluten diet, which necessitates finding a diet that contains carbohydrates other than wheat.

Many gastrointestinal supplements can be easily administered to the dog with IBD. Products containing probiotics, glucosamine, glutamine and digestive enzymes are all helpful in maintaining a healthy gastrointestinal tract. Ask your holistic veterinarian to suggest the proper supplements for your dog.

With the proper use of diet and supplements, most dogs with IBD can live long, healthy lives without the need for ongoing treatment with corticosteroids.