

# Pet Folio

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## The Lone Wolf of Washoe County

U.S. Wolf Refuge creates  
den of hope in Northern Nevada

### Frolicking Foals

An Inside Look at Maplewood Stables

### A Question of Canine Character

Temperament Testing for Dogs

### The Scoop on Poop

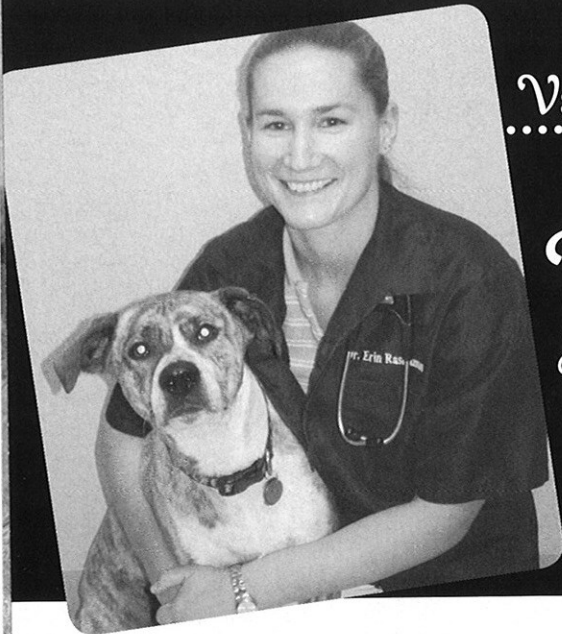
Pet Nutrition from End-to-End





# Pancreatitis and Your Dog

Holding back table scraps may be the best form of tough love



Dogs have far fewer taste buds than people do.

The weather is getting cooler and, while we are all anticipating the snow, many people in Reno are also planning family gatherings with elaborate gourmet meals. Veterinarians know that pancreatitis is a real danger during the holiday season, too often because dogs are allowed to munch table scraps and help clear overflowing plates. With that in mind, this article will help you understand how to recognize – and avoid – the common signs and causes of canine pancreatitis.

## What is pancreatitis?

Pancreatitis is, generally speaking, inflammation of the pancreas. The pancreas is an organ near the stomach that produces both insulin and digestive enzymes. During pancreatitis, normally safe enzymes are released prematurely and actually begin to digest the pancreas itself. Toxins from inflamed tissues are released into the body's circulatory system and can cause a body-wide inflammatory response. When the pancreas is significantly affected, diabetes mellitus can result and affect the ability to produce insulin on a temporary, or permanent, basis. The good news is that the inflammation is usually confined to the area of the liver and pancreas; however, even with this limitation, pancreatitis can be painful and life-threatening for our furry friends.

## Causes

It is often difficult to know exactly what predisposes dogs to pancreatitis. Research and clinical experience has shown that dogs who get into the trash, eat unusual food items, or who are fed table scraps are more likely to develop pancreatitis. Additionally, dogs who are overweight, have other metabolic imbalances, or need certain long-term medications are also prone to develop pancreatitis, although less frequently.

## Signs

Classic signs of canine pancreatitis are lethargic behavior, loss of appetite, vomiting, diarrhea, painful abdomen, and fever.

## Making the Diagnosis

To definitively diagnose pancreatitis, a biopsy is usually necessary. However, this is an invasive test and results are not available for many days. Therefore, veterinarians typically use a combination of clinical signs, history, blood tests, abdominal ultrasound results, and response to therapy.

## Treatments

Treatments recommended by your veterinarian can involve a bland, low-fat diet, pain control, and correcting/preventing dehydration. Dogs with severe pancreatitis might need to be hospitalized for multiple days for treatments including intravenous fluids, injectable pain medications and tube-feeding.

## Prevention

Even when your dog looks at you with those puppy-dog eyes, please remember that pancreatitis might be a result of getting table scraps – love and affection will still make your dog happy and possibly prevent an emergency visit to your veterinarian! 🐾

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