



## FACT SHEET

### EXOCRINE PANCREATIC INSUFFICIENCY (EPI)

The pancreas has two major functions. The endocrine system secretes insulin, a lack of this hormone causes diabetes and the exocrine system secretes digestive enzymes. EPI (Exocrine Pancreatic Insufficiency) is the pancreas' failure to produce these enzymes.

#### Affected breeds

Unfortunately, research suggests that Pancreatic Insufficiency is more common in some breeds of dog than others, the German Shepherd being one, it is often seen in terriers and spaniels too.

#### Symptoms

Symptoms may include:

- Weight loss
- Increased appetite (polyphagia)
- Eating faeces (coprophagia)
- Pica (craving and eating unusual articles)
- Frequent stools
- Diarrhoea and/or loose semi-formed stools
- Abdominal discomfort
- Flatulence and borborygmus (rumbling stomach)

In severe cases, the animal may be emaciated and weak due to muscle wasting. The coat may also be in poor condition.

Cats with EPI may have a poor coat condition which is greasy. However, the symptoms of EPI in cats are almost identical to a Vitamin B12 deficiency.

#### Treatment

Supplementation with digestive enzymes in capsule, tablet or powder form is usually advised. On the recommendation of the animal's vet the dose of the enzyme replacements may be reduced with time.

Recent research suggests that EPI may be caused by a Vitamin B12 deficiency, folate deficiency or a bacterial overgrowth.

Prebiotics (e.g. FOS – fructo-oligosaccharides) may be recommended to help with a bacterial overgrowth. Prebiotics feed the natural gut flora and consist of nutrients which promote the growth of friendly bacteria.

\* Hall J, Simpson J.W, Williams D BSAVA Manual of Canine and Feline Gastroenterology (2005). Published by BSAVA, Gloucester.



# NATURAL

## FOOD FOR PETS

DOG | CAT | RABBIT



## FACT SHEET

### Dietary management

The recommended diet:

- Highly digestible (the most important dietary characteristic)
- Low - moderate fat levels
- Low fibre
- 2 - 3 meals per day

### What should I feed my dog that has had EPI?

Vets will often give digestive enzymes to the dog to help them digest their food. Once the dog is having these they tend to improve drastically. A low fat diet will be easier for the dog to digest but some dogs with EPI do better on a moderate fat diet to help ensure they do not get deficiencies.

It is not advisable to try and 'feed him up' after being ill as too much food can overwork the pancreas. If your dog is very thin it is important that you speak to your vet.