

Chronic Vomiting in Cats

DRIP 2

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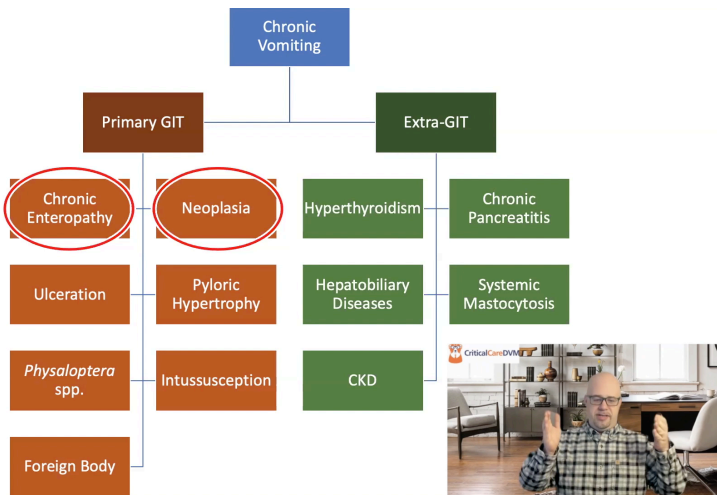
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Poll Question #1



I'm glad I asked this question. 57% of you said true, and 43% of you said false. So almost down the middle split, which means I'm glad we're going to review this topic.



So there are quite a few causes of chronic vomiting, OK. They're probably the bane of everybody's existence. But I like to initially divide them into it's the gut or it's everything else.

So in terms of primary gastrointestinal disease, your major differentials are right here. Some form of chronic enteropathy, cancer, the GI tract has an ulcer, we've been infested with physaloptera, we had a foreign body that's a chronic one in nature, or we have intussusception. And then, everything else. So in our cat friends, we're talking about hyperthyroidism, chronic pancreatitis, hepatobiliary diseases, systemic mastocytosis with all this degranulation of mast cell tumors, chronic kidney disease.

But statistically in the papers, in the published literature, the two most common causes of chronic vomiting cats are neoplasia, specifically, alimentary lymphoma or a form of chronic enteropathy, specifically inflammatory bowel disease or a steroid responsive enteropathy. And so for the remainder of this lecture, we're going to focus on these two primary differentials, because we cover the others in future lectures.



History

- Thorough owner interview is of paramount importance
- May yield clues that influence diagnostic and/or therapeutic recommendations
- Developed standardized history form to ensure no questions are missed
- Consider distributing questionnaire prior to consultation
- Leverage credentialed technicians



So you've heard it millions of times before, a history is so important, because hopefully, you're going to pick out a clue or a proverbial red flag from the owner that helps guide your recommendations for diagnostic testing or for therapeutic interventions. So if you don't already have one, I strongly recommend that you and your team develop a standardized history form, an actual format you can teach one of your assistants or one of your stellar nurses to always ask specific questions, period, during an initial consultation.

And sometimes, that can take some time. So one potential time saving technique is, if you know you're going to be seeing a patient for chronic vomiting, have one of your team members share that with the owner before if possible, and have them fill it out. And then you will have their answers at the time of your consultation. And you can just ask follow up questions or clarifying questions to add to the history form, OK.

And I'm pretty sure that Amy Newfield, our veterinary technician specialist in ECC would strongly advocate for leveraging your technicians and nurses to carry out this step of the process, because they are credentialed medical professionals, and we should be using them.

Vital Questions



Travel history	
Vomitus character	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Frequency, contents, temporal association with eating, etc.
Exposure to other animals	
Diet history	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Previous & current foods, table treats, etc.
Current medications	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nutraceuticals, vitamins, supplements, & preventatives
Previous medical conditions	
Previous surgeries	
Potential toxin exposure	
Concurrent clinical signs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PUPD, polyphagia, weight loss/gain, small/large/mixed diarrhea, neurological deficits

In terms of questions that I feel are very important are, obviously, travel history.

In my current job, I communicate with veterinarians all over the world. And so I recently had to become very familiar with infectious diseases in the European Union, versus in Scandinavia, versus in Australasia. So it's been an exciting time for me. But knowing where, if at all, a patient has traveled may influence your list of differential diagnoses.

I want to know a lot about the vomiting. I want to know how frequently they're vomiting, of course. I want to know what the contents are. And I'm going to encourage you to not accept bile as an answer. I want to know, is it yellow bile or is it green bile? Because remember, what color is bile? It is green. Why does it become yellow? Why do we say yellow vomit is bilious in nature? It's because it's undergone a chemical process through exposure to the gastric contents, OK.

So if you see green bile, that mean that bile shot straight up, didn't really spend any time in the stomach, and came out for all the world to see, OK. When does the vomiting happen? Is it always 15 minutes after vomiting or is it paroxysmal, meaning it happens at any time? Has our feline friend been exposed to other animals? And if so, what is their general health? Do we have to worry about them bringing infectious diseases onto the table for investigation?

What are they eating? What have they eaten? Previous foods, current foods, table treats, et cetera are all really important. We all know to get a thorough medication history, but I'm going to share with you that it's been my experience that pet owners don't always feel that things like nutraceuticals, and vitamins, and supplements are actual medications. So make sure whoever is getting your patients history asks about prescriptions, as well as vitamins and supplements, et cetera, because we don't want to leave anything off the list inadvertently.

And then, of course, previous medical conditions, any surgeries, any potential toxin exposure of a chronic nature. And are there other clinical signs, like weight gain or weight loss? Diarrhea, for example, is going to be a common concurrent clinical sign with a lot of the differentials for chronic vomiting.

Differentiating Diarrhea



	Small Bowel Diarrhea	Large Bowel Diarrhea
Straining	No	Yes
Melena (tar-like feces)	Yes	No
Hematochezia (raspberry jam-like feces)	No	Yes
Mucus (clear jelly in feces)	No	Yes
Weight loss	Yes	No
Urgency	No	Yes
Volume	Normal-to-large	Normal-to-small
Consistency	Variable, may be watery	Variable

And because chronic diarrhea happens so frequently in a concurrent fashion., remember, there is no such thing as diarrhea. It's small bowel, large bowel, or mixed bowel in nature. And so here are the common questions in differentiating features to help us make sure that we are always taking that brief moment to ask these simple questions of owners, to make sure that we are differentiating the type of our patient's diarrhea if it is present.