

## THE ACUTE ABDOMEN

This term describes the syndrome of sudden onset abdominal pain. It usually results in a markedly "tucked up" abdomen or the praying posture. It is very important to distinguish abdominal pain from spinal pain which will also cause the animal to "lock up" its abdominal muscles. The acute abdomen is usually accompanied by other abdominal signs- diarrhoea, vomiting, anorexia, abdominal guarding.

Be aware that there are MANY potential diagnoses:

### POSSIBLE PROBLEMS CAUSING ACUTE ABDOMINAL PAIN:

GASTROINTESTINAL Obstruction, Intussusception, Ulceration or Rupture, Torsion and Volvulus, Herniation.

SPLENIC Torsion or Rupture

BLADDER AND URETER Rupture, Blockage

PROSTATE Abscess and Prostatitis UTERUS Pyometra, Torsion

NEOPLASIA

LIVER Rupture, Trauma, Torsion of a lobe, Gall bladder and bile duct injuries

PANCREATITIS

GASTROENTERITIS

KIDNEY Nephritis and Renal calculi

PERITONITIS

POISONING

Also - Hypoadrenocorticism (Addison's disease), Torsion of a retained testicle or uterus, particularly if pregnant.

Always ask the owner about possible trauma and possible access to poisons, particularly heavy metal poisons (lead, arsenic - batteries, old paint), pesticides and corrosive poisons.

In general, fluid therapy is usually OK, but not fluids by mouth, until a clearer diagnosis is established.