

My Senior Cat Has Digestion Issues

CatChannel veterinary expert Arnold Plotnick, DVM, has some advice for getting to the root of the problem.

By Arnold Plotnick, DVM

Posted: May 29, 2009, 3 a.m. EDT

Q: My 11-year-old cat has had some vomiting and soft stool issues lately. Before she had issues with urinary tract infections all the time, and a weight issue as well. She has gone from 15 pounds to 11.5 pounds in the last year. She has been eating Purina Pro Plan urinary tract wet food and has been on the Cosequin supplement to help with her joints (in her old age). Lately, she has had very soft stool. It is getting tracked around our house. Also, she has been vomiting more than normal. Any suggestions? I was possibly going to switch her to a raw diet, but she can't eat hard food because one of her canine teeth is loose. Please help us.

A: There are many reasons for soft stool in cats. Unfortunately, you didn't mention in your letter if there was any blood or mucus in the stool, or if your cat has had any accidents in the house, in terms of defecation. Blood, mucus, urgency and very watery consistency fits with large-bowel diarrhea, or colitis. Many cats with colitis will also vomit. Colitis, however, doesn't usually cause weight loss. Your cat has lost weight, so this could actually be a small bowel problem, not a large bowel problem.

I'm not a big proponent of raw diets. In your cat's case, I'd be reluctant to switch diets, because your cat has had a history of urinary problems, and the diet you're feeding is specially formulated for this type of problem. Still, I'd consider a diet designed for cats with gastrointestinal problems, such as Iams Low Residue formula, or Hill's Prescription Diet i/d, at least temporarily, until the diarrhea resolves.