

Loose Bowels Battle

Sample testing is needed for definitive diagnosis of weight loss and soft stool problem.

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Some of these parasites require obtaining a very fresh sample (right from the cat!) or special testing for diagnosis. Depending on the cause, treatment has varying degrees of success. Still, I think you ought to pursue a full fecal analysis to rule out these potential problems.

Your vet is on the right track looking for liver, kidney or pancreatic disease, as they can all have diarrhea as a symptom; however, pancreatic disease often does not have reliable tell-tale changes on routine blood work and requires special testing. This is quite difficult to diagnose in cats.

Performing a TLI (Trypsin-like immunoreactivity) or an ultrasound scan of the pancreas may lend more support to that diagnosis, but I hardly think that you should leap to those measures right away.

I am assuming that your kitty has been tested for the routine viral diseases, like feline leukemia virus (FeLV) and feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV). If not, it is imperative that you do this before you invest a great deal in other testing. If she has either of these diseases, they need to be addressed. They could be the primary cause, or may merely be contributory to her current problem. If she has had an FIV vaccination, she will test positive for the FIV test. It is important to tell this to your vet.

Of course, it is impossible to tell you what is wrong, but I think that one of the most likely problems might be that she has an inflammatory or infiltrative bowel disorder. This group of diseases is often difficult to diagnose, but includes lymphocytic-plasmacytic enteritis (LPE), eosinophilic enteritis (EE), lymph sarcoma (unfortunately cancer), and feline infectious peritonitis (caused by a rather nasty virus), as potential causes of the thickening of the intestines and resultant chronic diarrhea.

Intestinal biopsies performed earlier rather than later in the course of any of these diseases will generally tell what you are dealing with, so appropriate therapy can be instituted. Full-thickness intestinal biopsies from various parts of the GI tract are preferred over endoscopic biopsies, but often we start with the less invasive endoscopic procedure first. If this does not yield an answer, we then move to a laparotomy (abdominal exploratory and biopsies). Although this may seem radical, keep in mind that it is not any more risky than a spay if performed by an experienced veterinary surgeon.