

**Colitis – IBS**  
**ALTERNATIVE VETERINARY MEDICINE CENTRE**

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**COLITIS – I.B.S.**

*(this item was written in response to a letter in a dog magazine, from a Westie owner)*

Thank you for this challenging question. Colitis is a common problem, which justifies making this month's article on the subject. It can be extremely painful and distressing, resulting in days of misery at a stretch. Too many dogs suffer like this but a large percentage can find relief through [homeopathic](#) medication, with full [holistic](#) support.

In natural medicine, we don't set store by finding a name for all disease and the name 'colitis', although helpful, only describes symptoms, not the disease or the root cause.

As always with chronic disease, there is not one cause, nor is there one solution to all such cases. This is an immune-related problem and often starts within three months of a vaccination event, so the stimulus of [vaccination](#) must be considered as part of the aetiology. There may be individual susceptibilities, which predispose certain dogs to the problem.

Homeopathy recognises the rôle of the mind in any chronic disease. A sufferer is often anxious or tense, especially at the time of bouts. Whether this is part of the cause or part of the effect is not certain. It is more probably part of both. Whichever we believe, it is important to consider it when prescribing.

First and foremost, as in all chronic disease, [diet](#) is of paramount importance. The dog may be sensitive to certain food ingredients. Firstly, find a home-made base diet, which is well-tolerated. Individual **pure** additions can be made, to work out which might trigger an adverse reaction. The diet should then be as varied as possible, avoiding ingredients to which the dog is sensitive (after successful homeopathic treatment, the dog may lose his intolerance to wholesome ingredients). In the early stages, I would tend to rule out **all**

**manufactured foods** and those foods which are derived from wheat or milk. Before returning to try normal wheat-containing foods, I would try 'durum' wheat as it is 'milder'. It is in pasta or cous-cous. Spelt may also be a good alternative. I have discussed these ideas in my diet booklet (*Feeding Dogs the Natural Way*).

There is speculation in human cases, that the cow disease *Johne's Disease* may play a part in colitis, Crohn's disease and irritable bowel syndrome. This infection can come from milk, even if it has been pasteurised.

I would consider the [homeopathic alternatives](#) to revaccination. This should be under the guidance of a [vet](#) who is well-versed in such an approach. If a dog is over 8 y.o. and fully-boosted until now, you may feel able to dispense with any form of booster in future. There is no science behind repeating vaccines, as we do, so he may have received enough protection for life, depending upon his age. It is certainly likely that booster vaccinations can prevent you from curing him.

The usual conventional treatment includes Salazopyrine, which is known to have a potential for such adverse effects as 'dry eye' (keratoconjunctivitis sicca - KCS). Since Westies can be especially prone to that disease (but any breed can develop 'dry eye'), extreme caution and careful monitoring of the eyes is necessary in that breed, if that drug has been used.

We would consider the '*bowel nosodes*', best prescribed by a [homeopathically-qualified vet](#). We also seek the constitutional medicine for the patient, since this is a chronic disease. In 'pure-bred' Westies, common constitutional 'types' are *Calcarea carbonica*, *Sulphur*, *Pulsatilla*, *Natrum mur.*, *Natrum sulph.*, *Phosphorus* and *Graphites*. Any of these could be relevant in colitis, depending upon constitutional considerations. **Probiotics** may be useful, too, in the early stages of treatment. My best advice is to see a vet who is well-versed in homeopathy and I would expect the patient to feel a lot better for it.

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