

The Importance of Dietary History

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In the Literature

Giacometti F, Magarotto J, Serraino A, Piva S. Highly suspected cases of salmonellosis in 2 cats fed with a commercial raw meat-based diet: health risks to animals and zoonotic implications. *BMC Vet Res.* 2017;13:224.

FROM THE PAGE ...

Diets containing raw meat, organs, egg, or bones are preferred by some pet owners; these diets are either homemade or commercially available products that may or may not be nutritionally complete or balanced. *Salmonella* spp and other potentially pathogenic microorganisms are commonly identified in commercial raw pet foods, and there have been reports of dogs and cats contracting salmonellosis from dietary sources.¹⁻³

This case report described the presentation and treatment of 2 previously healthy cats from the same household that were diagnosed with salmonellosis. The first cat was presented for anorexia, weight loss, vomiting, and diarrhea. The owner reported feeding homemade and commercial dry pet food. Diagnostics included CBC and serum chemistry profile, as well as fecal flotation and SNAP ELISA for *Giardia* spp, both of which were negative. Significant findings included neutrophilia, monocytosis, mild elevations in liver enzymes, and hypoalbuminemia. Hepatopathy with probable infectious enteritis was diagnosed; treatment included IV fluids, antibiotics, parasitocides, probiotics, a veterinary therapeutic intestinal diet, and S-adenosylmethionine.

The second cat in the household was presented 4 days later for similar clinical signs and had similar laboratory findings. Further dietary history revealed the homemade food to be a commercial raw poultry-based diet. The differential list was expanded to include enteropathogens from a contaminated dietary source; stool was submitted for PCR assay, which detected *Salmonella* spp and *Clostridium perfringens* enterotoxin gene. *Salmonella* spp were also detected in the raw diet but not the kibble; small numbers of *C perfringens* were cultured from both diets. Because *C perfringens* is likely an opportunistic pathogen but is also found in healthy cats, salmonellosis was

the probable cause of clinical signs in both cats described in this report.^{4,5}

... TO YOUR PATIENTS

Key pearls to put into practice:

- 1** A thorough dietary history should be collected for every patient at each visit. Initially, the owner in this case did not reveal that the diet included raw animal products. Recording diet details, including brand and product names, is essential.
- 2** Clinicians and owners should discuss owner goals and philosophies of feeding unconventional diets, as fear or guilt sometimes influences these choices due to misinformation regarding risks and benefits of specific products and feeding practices.
- 3** Owners should be educated about the health risks of feeding homemade or commercial diets containing raw animal products, which are more likely to be contaminated with pathogenic microorganisms.

References

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