

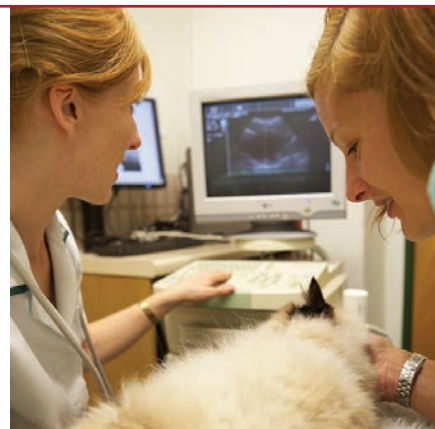
## FOCUS Measuring the Pancreas via Ultrasound

Reference values for ultrasonographic pancreatic size and the appearance of the pancreatic duct have been reported for cats, but limited data are available for dogs. This study described the ultrasonographic appearance and size of the pancreas and pancreatic duct in dogs ( $n = 242$ ) with no clinical evidence of GI disease. Pancreatic thickness ranged from 3.5–16 mm, with a reference value of ~1 cm in medium-sized dogs (15–30 kg of body weight). Mean pancreatic duct diameter in medium-sized dogs was 0.8 mm; range in all dogs was 0.1–1.2 mm. The right and left pancreatic ducts were visible in 88% and 16.9% of dogs, respectively. The body was visible in only 6.6% of dogs. Although positive correlations were found between body weight and pancreatic duct diameter, no significant correlations were found between age and pancreatic thickness or pancreatic

duct diameter. These values may be useful for assessing pancreatic abnormalities (eg, chronic pancreatitis, exocrine pancreatic insufficiency).

### ■ Commentary

As vomiting is a common indication for abdominal ultrasound, pancreatic evaluation is essential. There are cases in which the pancreas appears normal in shape and echogenicity but is subjectively enlarged. Although this study provided measurements from 242 healthy dogs for more objective evaluations, the patients were considered healthy based on lack of GI signs; no objective criteria (eg, canine pancreatic-specific lipase, histopathology) were obtained to confirm absence of pancreatic disease. Another concern: when the pancreas was measured, the term *thickness* was used, and this definition is



vague. Based on the figures in the study used as illustrations, it appears that the pancreas was measured in a dorsal-to-ventral dimension.—*Jean K. Reichle, DVM, MS, DACVR*

### ■ ■ Source

Ultrasonographic measurement of the pancreas and pancreatic duct in clinically normal dogs. Penninck DG, Zeyen U, Taeymans ON, Webster CR. *AM J VET RES* 74:433-437, 2013.

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