

CHRONIC KIDNEY DISEASE: Basic Information

The kidneys are very important body organs. Normal kidneys filter and remove waste materials that result from normal body functioning from the blood stream. They also regulate the amount of fluid retained by the body as well as play a major role in maintaining the overall strength of the blood supply. Anemia is a common problem in pets with chronic kidney disease.

Kidney disease may have many causes: inherited defects, infections, poisons and toxic substances, and nutritional factors. Old age is also a common factor in the condition termed “chronic renal failure” and is the primary cause of death in many older pets. Often the exact cause of kidney failure cannot be determined, but with careful examination and testing, the severity of the disease can be evaluated so that the best method of management for the condition can be recommended. Some of these tests include:

1. Urine analysis
2. Urine cultures to identify specific infections
3. Blood chemistry testing
4. Radiographs (X-rays)
5. Kidney biopsy

SIGNS OF CHRONIC KIDNEY DISEASE ARE A RESULT OF BODY WASTE MATERIALS BUILDING UP IN THE BLOODSTREAM BECAUSE THE KIDNEYS ARE NOT FUNCTIONING PROPERLY.

SIGNS INCLUDE:

1. Loss of appetite
2. Increase thirst (water consumption)
3. Increased frequency of urination
4. Poor haircoat
5. Depression
6. Vomiting

TREATMENT OF CHRONIC KIDNEY DISEASE. In the early stages of chronic kidney failure, successful management is possible by feeding *special prescription diets*. These prescription foods will help control salt loss and reduce the amount of toxic waste products that are found in regular foods, which heavily burden weakened kidneys. Several diets are available and the appropriate one will be recommended for your particular pet after evaluation to determine the severity of the problem. It is very important to follow our diet recommendations closely. Nothing else should be fed (including treats!) without our recommendation. This means no meat, eggs, cheese, bones, or rawhide chew strips. Fresh clean water should always be available to the pet. Limiting water availability to your pet can be fatal. Frequent monitoring of the various tests related to kidney function is a must to provide your pet the longest and best quality of life possible.