

KIDNEY DISEASE (Chronic)

The main function of the kidney is to filter the body's blood supply of body poisons and waste products. All of the body's blood flows through the kidneys to be cleansed of all chemicals not needed by the body. The kidney allows some of the water and other essential substances to pass back into the bloodstream to maintain the normal body composition while excreting waste products into the bladder.

Causes of kidney disease include birth defects, bacterial or viral infections, injury, poisons, stones, cancer and many others. If the kidneys are damaged severely, they are not able to perform properly, so waste materials accumulate in the blood, poisoning the body.

The more common forms of kidney disease are often progressive and may become more serious, especially without proper care. However, most pets are able to recover from many forms of kidney disease with proper treatment and diet changes.

The body continues to function normally as long as there remains at least 10% functional kidney tissue.

Initial signs of kidney disease include: loss of appetite, increased water consumption, and increased urination. **Later signs include:** vomiting, depression, and dehydration resulting from an inadequate amount of water in the body from vomiting, inability to drink, or excessive urine output.

Signs of kidney disease are seen when damage reaches the point that the kidneys cannot rid the body of waste products that accumulate continuously or when the delicate fluid/electrolyte balance of the body cannot be maintained.

Excessive urine is allowed to pass through the kidneys once severe damage occurs. This results in dehydration causing the pet to drink more and more leading to a continually increasing volume of urine. The cycle gets worse and worse.

Vomiting, diarrhea, and difficult breathing appear as the disease progresses with a buildup of waste products in the blood stream.

Anemia may occur in severe cases because the kidneys are involved in the production of red blood cells.

MANAGEMENT OF CHRONIC KIDNEY DISEASE:

- 1. Allow free access to clean, fresh water.**
- 2. Protect your pet from stress, such as extreme exertion, excitement, and hot or cold temperatures.**

- 3. Feed Prescription Diet k/d® or u/d® as directed.**

These diets are specially formulated to reduce the demands on the kidney. The highest quality protein available must be utilized to decrease the continuing damage occurring within the kidneys.

- 4. Give drugs as directed depending on the type of kidney disease present.**