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Vets Love Pets!

Dr. Tammy Wilde & Associates



Living with Kidney Disease

What is Kidney Disease?

When healthy, the kidneys perform several key functions and remove waste products from the body in the form of urine. Kidney disease is the inability of the kidneys to function properly, they can no longer perform their crucial functions of excreting waste product, regulating the fluid and mineral balance of body fluids and producing hormones. The waste products accumulate in the blood and act as toxins.

What causes kidney disease?

There are many causes of kidney disease. The most common is that the kidneys simply "wear out" due to age. Your pet may also suffer kidney failure as a result of ingesting toxic substances such as antifreeze. Additionally, some types of infections may cause kidney function to decline.

What type of pet is most susceptible to kidney disease?

Older dogs and cats are more likely to have kidney disease than younger pets. Cats and small dogs show early signs of chronic kidney failure at 10 to 14 years of age, while large dogs may experience kidney failure much earlier.

Cats have kidney disease more frequently than dogs. Certain breeds of dogs (such as the *Lhasa Apso*, *Shih Tzu*, *Basenji*, *Norwegian Elkhound* and the *Soft-Coated Wheaten Terrier*) and cats (such as the *Persian*, *Himalayan*, *Siamese* and *Abyssinian*) are more prone to developing kidney problems. That said, all breeds of dogs and cats can be affected, and at any age.



What signs should I look for?

Any of the following signs may indicate kidney failure:

- Excessive drinking of water
- Increased urination
- Lethargy
- Vomiting
- Bad Breath
- Not eating for a day or more
- Weakness
- Lack of co-ordination when walking
- Depression
- Weight loss or wasting of muscle tissue



How is kidney disease diagnosed?

Unfortunately the clinical signs of kidney disease are usually undetectable until at least two thirds of the kidney function is lost. Tests are necessary to diagnose chronic (gradual) and acute (sudden) kidney disease and to rule out other diseases. Blood and urine samples are used to test various kidney functions and to make sure that infection is not the cause of the disease.

Veterinarians can differentiate between chronic and acute kidney disease based on your pet's history, physical examinations and laboratory testing and in some instances a kidney biopsy may be necessary.

All pets over the age of 7, and older, should be screened early for kidney disease **before** signs of illness appear. A simple ERD (early renal detection) test could greatly increase the life span of your pet.

Treatment

While acute kidney disease is potentially reversible with aggressive treatment, chronic kidney disease can not be reversed. Early detection, nutritional intervention and medication can give pets longer, better quality lives. Your veterinarian will recommend a well-balanced food with a reduced amount of phosphorus, salt, protein and higher amounts of fibre to reduce kidney workload. A food with increased fatty acids also improves blood flow to the kidneys.



LIBRA

24 Sept - 23 Oct

DOGS: Libran dogs are very peaceful, easygoing and charming to the point of being very persuasive. They make it hard for you to say no when those big brown eyes of theirs plead for food at the table. They really enjoy the companionship of humans and they also love the company of other dogs. These sociable pets will give a warm welcome to any visitors to your home. They can sometimes be a little stubborn, so if they don't want to go for a walk you could find yourself staying at home.

CATS: Libran cats are also peaceful, easygoing and charming, however they can be indecisive – they won't know whether they want to come in or go out. They will move from your lap to the radiator, to the sofa, trying to find the most comfortable spot. They thrive in a stable and serene environment and like everything to be in its proper place, such as food & water dishes and bedding as this helps keep their scales balanced. They are also very loving and sensitive to your moods. If you are sick or upset you can see them asking in their eyes, "what can I do to help?".



Getting the right nutrition for pets with kidney disease



It is very important for pets who suffer with kidney disease to eat a veterinary prescribed diet. These diets are scientifically designed to be low in protein, phosphorus and sodium, but have added potassium. Many of the toxic products that accumulate in the blood in kidney disease are a result of protein breakdown, and feeding a low protein diet will therefore help to minimize this. However, protein restriction has to be handled with care as too little protein in the diet can lead to excessive weight loss that would be detrimental to a pet's general health. The main effect of a low protein diet is to minimize production of uremic toxins so that your pet feels better and, as high phosphorus accelerates kidney disease, the restricted levels in their prescription diet will help to slow it down. These days there are a wide variety of prescription foods available and our veterinary healthcare team is on hand to advise you on the best one for your pet.

De-Worming Still Essential

Summer may be over but don't be fooled into thinking that the risk of worms and parasites is over. If your pet ventures outside, is going into a kennel or cattery, plays at a doggie day care or dog park, it is just as important to de-worm them in the fall and winter seasons as they are still at risk and it is also especially important to de-worm them if there are children in the household.



Photo of the heart of a dog infected with heartworm

PET FIRST AID COURSE

OCTOBER 18, 2007
7pm – 9pm



After a very successful Pet First Aid course back in July we have had many requests to offer a second course which we are pleased to announce will take place this month. So come and join us on October 18 for a fun and informative evening learning about first aid for your pets. Some of the subjects that will be covered are:

Stabilizing a fracture 🐾 Poisonings and how to induce vomiting 🐾 CPR 🐾 Heat Stroke 🐾 Burns 🐾 Dressing Wounds 🐾 Choking 🐾 How to muzzle

The cost of the course is \$60 and will include a complimentary first aid pack. If you bring a friend they will receive a 50% discount **

** does not include first aid pack



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