

Renal Disease

Kidney disease in your pet can be a serious condition. Your pet's kidneys are responsible for cleansing the blood and maintaining proper levels of water and salt within the body. Chronic renal disease usually develops gradually over time as your pet ages, but it can also develop secondary to other conditions, such as diabetes or cancer. When the kidneys become less efficient at removing waste products, they try to keep up by increasing the amount of urine they produce. This means that the urine will become more dilute, and that your pet will drink more water and urinate more often. This condition is termed renal insufficiency or, when more advanced, renal failure.

Renal disease can also develop rapidly in pets of any age in certain circumstances. Poisons such as antifreeze and certain drugs can damage your pet's kidneys suddenly, resulting in acute renal failure. Sometimes, stones can form in the kidney or bladder, causing urine to back up and damage. Bacterial infections within the kidneys can also damage this delicate tissue, leading to renal failure.

There are many causes of renal disease, and they may include:

- Age
- Viral, fungal, or bacterial infections
- Parasites
- Cancer
- Amyloidosis (caused by abnormal deposits of a certain type of protein in the kidney)
- Inflammation

Early signs of Renal Insufficiency:

Increased thirst and urination, as the system increases the amount of urine flow. As renal failure develops, waste products build up in the blood, causing a loss of appetite, vomiting, and generally ill health. Straining to urinate is usually a sign of bladder problems, not kidney disease.

Diagnosis:

Kidney disease can be diagnosed using a combination of blood and urine tests. Your veterinarian may recommend a CBC, full chemistry panel, radiographs or ultrasounds to initially diagnose or further determine the health of the kidneys or other organs which may be affected.

Treatment:

Pets that are severely ill from kidney disease or kidney failure may need hospitalization and intensive care to recover. In other cases, antibiotics, fluids, and other medications given on an outpatient basis are effective. Chronic kidney disease and chronic kidney failure are progressive, irreversible conditions. Treatment generally focuses on slowing the progression of disease and improving quality of life for the patient. Pets can sometimes experience a good quality of life for many years after being diagnosed with kidney disease or kidney failure.

Your vet may prescribe a special protein-restricted diet so that the kidneys do not have to work as hard and to limit the buildup of waste products in the blood. You should also make certain that your pet always has access to plenty of fresh drinking water.