

Village Veterinary Practice Newsletter

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Kidney Copes with Chronic Renal Failure

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Hours

M—Th: 7:45am—5:30pm
Friday: 7:45am—5:00pm
Call for Saturdays
House Calls Available

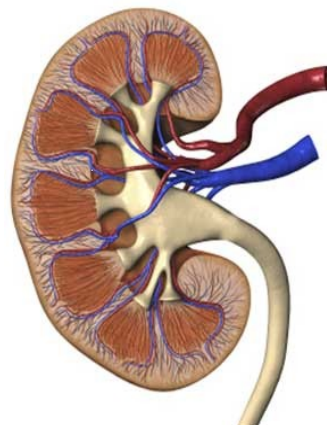
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Chronic renal failure is the most common kidney problem in dogs and cats. Though it is a condition that worsens with time, special care and treatment can help keep your pet feeling good. Chronic renal failure can be congenital, genetic, acquired, or of unknown cause. Cats, especially Maine Coon, Abyssinian, Siamese, Russian Blue, and Burmese breeds, are more commonly diagnosed with chronic renal failure than are dogs.

Early signs that may indicate chronic renal failure include weight loss, poor coat condition, dehydration, and lethargy. "More often than not, the signs are non-specific and the animal just doesn't seem himself," says Dr. Shelia McCullough, veterinarian formerly at the University of Illinois Veterinary Teaching Hospital in Urbana. "With chronic renal failure, people often report that the pet has been going downhill for a long time. Pets may drink and need to urinate more than usual, and sometimes they urinate in inappropriate places."

The kidney performs many important and diverse jobs in the body. Thought the kidneys were just helping to eliminate excess fluid after drinking a large soft drink? Think again! It's true, the kidney's main role is to keep the right amount of water in the body. To do this, when the body needs more water, the kidney sends signals to the brain that you recognize as thirst. Drink too much and the excess fluid sends you searching for the nearest facilities.



But the kidney also plays a very important role in keeping blood pressure in check, maintaining salt and electrolyte balance, keeping blood at the correct pH, helping the body absorb calcium, and eliminating waste products, such as urea, a product of protein breakdown. To do this, the kidney continuously filters the blood. Of the 180 liters of plasma filtered from the blood throughout the day, the kidney normally reabsorbs all but the 1 to 2 percent that is eliminated in the urine. "The kidney is the hardest working and the smartest organ in the body," says Dr. McCullough.

Kidney Copes with Chronic Renal Failure

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Because the kidney performs so many important functions in the body, when it is diseased, the effects may be felt in many places. "When chronic kidney failure is left untreated, the results may be seen in the gastrointestinal system with vomiting and diarrhea. Commonly, ulcers will form in the mouth. High blood pressure is a side effect of kidney failure that can lead to heart problems, or a detached retina. The buildup of waste products in the blood can cause behavioral changes, irritability, seizures, weakness, and depression," says Dr. McCullough.

If your veterinarian suspects chronic renal failure, she may suggest blood work to measure the components of the blood, including urea, phosphate, and creatinine, that would normally be removed by a properly working kidney. Radiographs or ultrasound may also help the clinician make a diagnosis.

In general, treatment is aimed at making the kidney's job a little easier. It usually includes intravenous fluid therapy, potassium supplementation, and feeding a special low-protein, low-phosphate diet. Special diets for kidney patients are available commercially or can be homemade. Depending on the case, your veterinarian may offer options to combat some of the other problems your pet may experience due to chronic renal failure to make your pet as comfortable as possible.

Carrie Gustavson
Information Specialist
University of Illinois College of Veterinary Medicine



Pets with kidney disease can live longer lives with the help of prescription kidney therapeutic diets, at home fluid therapy, oral medication and supplements.



Pepper's Problem—A Case by Dr. Hayna

Meet Pepper— a sweet little black lab puppy with a big problem. Pepper's owners first brought her to see Dr. Hayna for a general new puppy exam at seven weeks of age. Aside from a few mild bumps on her belly, Pepper was a healthy puppy.

Two and a half weeks later, Pepper's owners brought her back into the hospital with some big concerns. Pepper had developed bumps on her upper and lower eyelids which was accompanied by a large amount of ocular discharge—by this time, Pepper's eyelids had swollen shut. Pepper also had pustules on her lips, ears and abdomen. She was not coughing or sneezing and was eating, drinking and eliminating normally. But clearly this puppy was uncomfortable. Dr. Hayna began treating Pepper for pyoderma (a pus containing skin infection). Pepper was placed oral antibiotics as well as ophthalmic antibiotics. Samples of the pustules were taken and sent to the lab for a diagnostic culture to determine if bacteria was causing this puppy problems. If Pepper did not respond to the medications, her owners were prepared that skin biopsies would be necessary to determine the cause of her condition.

Several days later, Pepper had not improved. In fact, she was worse. There was more swelling, more pustules and her lymph nodes were enlarged. The culture came back negative which meant bacteria was not the root cause of this problem. It was time for a skin biopsy to get some answers.

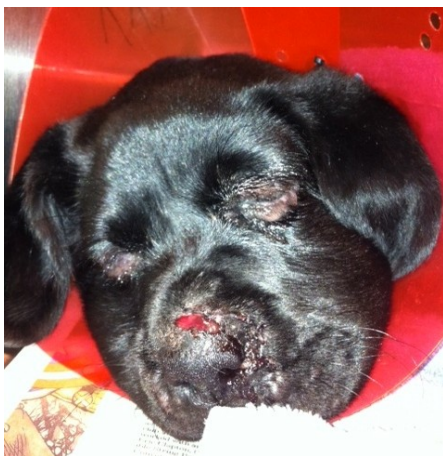
A full blood panel was performed and Pepper was sedated to obtain skin biopsies. Pepper was sent home on pain medication and steroids in addition to her continued antibiotics while we awaited the biopsy results.

Three days later, Pepper arrived for her recheck exam. There was significant improvement in the swelling, pustules, eyes, and enlarged lymph nodes. Pepper was responding well to the steroid therapy. Her owner's were instructed to continue the antibiotic and steroid therapy in addition to bathing Pepper with a medicated shampoo.

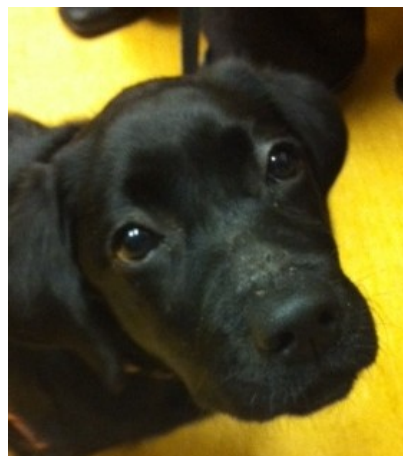
Several days later, the biopsy results were in. Based upon the clinical appearance of Pepper and the skin biopsies, Pepper was diagnosed with Juvenile Cellulitis (also known as puppy strangles). This is typically an immune-mediated condition that can occur suddenly in puppies three weeks to four months of age. Puppies typically respond well the Prednisone (a steroid) therapy.

Over the next two and a half months, Pepper continued to improve with each recheck exam and was gradually weaned off her Prednisone therapy. At the last recheck visit on October 14th, Pepper's juvenile cellulitis had resolved. Despite a little scarring on the bridge of her nose, Pepper is doing great!

BEFORE



AFTER



Cold Weather TIP

As we prepare for the cold weather, please take caution when using Antifreeze (ethylene glycol). This substance has an attractive taste to both domestic and wild animals, and is highly toxic when ingested.

According to the ASPCA, "if veterinary treatment is not begun within a few hours after exposure, one teaspoonful of ethylene glycol can be fatal to a 10-pound cat, while one to two tablespoonfuls can kill a 10-pound dog."

If your pet should consume any amount of this substance, please call our offices immediately or head to the Animal ER.

VVP Thanksgiving Holiday Closures

Both Village Veterinary Practice locations will be closed on November 24th in observance of the Thanksgiving Day Holiday.

To allow our staff more time with their families over the Thanksgiving weekend, our Clarendon Hills location will be open from 7:45am to 12:00pm on Friday, November 25th and our Western Springs location will be closed.

If an emergency should arise with your pet while our offices are closed, please contact Arboretum View Emergency Services at (630) 963-0424.

All of us at Village Veterinary Practice wish you a Happy Turkey Day!



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www.villageveterinary.com

The Village Veterinary Practice Vision

Village Veterinary Practice was founded with the belief that companion animals deserve the best quality of life possible. Our vision is inspired by our patients, the devotion of their human families and the commitment of our veterinarians. It is sustained by the contributions of our compassionate, knowledgeable and dedicated staff and built upon a strong tradition of providing unsurpassed veterinary care for companion animals.

The Village Veterinary Practice Mission

Village Veterinary Practice was established to care for your pet as a family member. By utilizing the latest medical advances, sound guidance and desire, we strive to make the family pet bond an enjoyable, healthy and life enriching experience.