

Treatment for specific complications

High phosphate, low potassium, high blood pressure, and anaemia can be treated with specific therapies. Protein loss via the kidneys (proteinuria) can be treated with medications. Data from clinical trials indicate cats that have CKD and proteinuria have a better appetite and quality of life when treated with medications than when not treated. Anti-sickness tablets and appetite stimulants are also commonly used to increase the appetite in pets with CRD.

Monitoring

It is important to closely monitor your pet's weight, appetite and general demeanour. Your vet may monitor your pet by taking further blood and urine samples.

Prognosis

Whilst there is no cure for this condition, pets that develop renal disease may continue to enjoy a good quality of life whilst on treatment.

Whilst not all pets will respond to treatment, if we can protect the remaining kidney tissue we can often significantly improve your pet's quality of life and life expectancy.



Summary

Any animal with chronic renal disease has permanently damaged kidneys. Whilst not all pets will respond to treatment, if we can protect the remaining kidney tissue we can often significantly improve and prolong your pet's life.



XLVets Small Animal member veterinary practices work together to share experience, knowledge and ideas to ensure the highest levels of quality and care for their client's pets. XLVet member practices provide a compassionate and caring service for all pets and at the same time offer comprehensive and up-to-date treatment in all fields of veterinary medicine and surgery.

CHRONIC RENAL DISEASE (KIDNEY DISEASE)



Chronic renal disease is a common disease of older cats, but may also occur in young cats and dogs. It is often caused by ongoing damage to the kidneys over time, however injuries, toxins, infections, cysts or tumours can also cause kidney disease.

Until the disease is relatively advanced it may be difficult to detect, and by the stage at which signs of illness are obvious, only 25% of normal kidney function may remain.

What do the kidneys do?

- Excrete waste products through the urine (including protein breakdown products)
- Control of normal body water balance and acidity levels
- Control of blood salt levels and as a result blood pressure
- Control of hormones involved in calcium metabolism and red blood cell production.

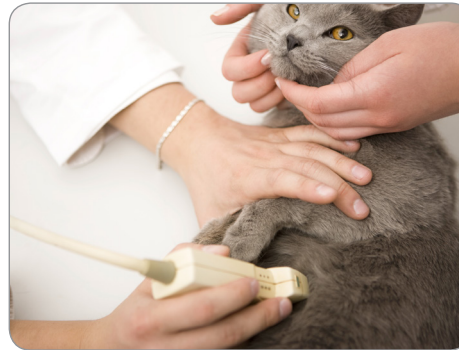
What are the signs of kidney disease?

Drinking more, urinating more, weight loss, nausea/vomiting, poor appetite, and diarrhoea or constipation. Additionally, pets with kidney disease may have anaemia, urinary tract infections and/or high blood pressure.



Diagnosis

Blood and urine samples are needed to detect kidney disease. These diagnose and stage the progression of the disease and rule out other concurrent abnormalities. Additionally, blood pressure should be measured. High blood pressure is a common feature of kidney disease and often it can be present with no outward symptoms. Further diagnostic tests include radiographs and ultrasound scans of the kidneys.



What can we do ?

Unfortunately, chronic renal disease is progressive and there is no cure.

THERE ARE HOWEVER MANY WAYS IN WHICH WE CAN INFLUENCE THE PROGRESSION OF THE DISEASE AND IMPROVE YOUR PETS LIFE.

Specific dietary therapy

Kidney diets are the most important treatment cats with CKD can receive. They improve the quality of life and life expectancy of your cat. These diets have low phosphate. In CKD phosphate retention is common. This leads to secondary renal hyperparathyroidism which worsens your cat's clinical signs and also shortens their life expectancy.

Low levels of high quality protein. Protein breakdown products are responsible for the clinical signs of CKD. Lower protein leads to fewer signs, but high quality still provides the energy.

Higher levels of potassium and B vitamins. In CKD these are lost in the urine, which can lead to a reduced appetite and low levels of potassium may worsen kidney disease.

Increased calories. This helps cats with a poorer appetite maintain a normal body weight.

Specially designed diets are available in a variety of formulations and flavours. Pets with kidney disease often have a poor appetite so we may start with highly palatable foods, or mix special diet with existing foods, along with using medication to stimulate the pet's appetite.

Although special diets are very useful, the most important thing is that your pet eats something. If your pet does not eat, he/she will start to break down their own body tissue which will lead to a rapid deterioration in their condition.

The only single treatment that has been proven to increase the life expectancy in cats with CKD is feeding a special kidney diet (sometimes by up to 3 times).

Dehydration is very common in cats with CKD. Suggestions to get your cat to drink more include

1. Providing multiple water bowls
2. Use glass, ceramic or metal water bowls (not plastic)
3. Fill water bowls to the brim
4. Add water to the food
5. Flavour the water with tuna or prawns. Additionally, cats may be given subcutaneous fluids injected under the skin.