

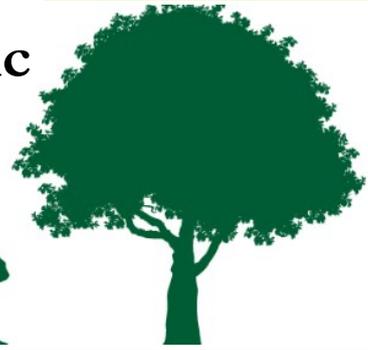
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Damory Veterinary Clinic

Small Animal Factsheet



KIDNEY DISEASE

Kidney disease can be Acute (sudden onset) or Chronic (more gradual onset)
Chronic renal disease is more commonly seen, usually affecting older cats and dogs.

Acute Renal Disease

Some causes of acute renal failure could include toxin ingestion (such as anti-freeze), bladder obstruction, trauma (such as a road traffic accident) or even severe infection. Acute renal failure is a genuine emergency and needs prompt and aggressive treatment. Even then, the prognosis is guarded and the animal would be likely to have a degree of permanent kidney damage even if they did recover from the immediate episode.

Signs to look for are sudden significant increase in thirst, subdued demeanour, discomfort and in many cases, lack of urine output initially.

Chronic Renal Disease

This is much more common, particularly in cats. This disease can be part of a normal ageing process but there could also be a genetic component, for example poly-cystic kidney disease of Persian cats. The condition also occurs in dogs but less commonly although the tests and treatments are very similar.

The kidneys' role is to filter waste products in the blood. With age, these filters (called glomeruli) can become damaged and less effective. This means that the kidneys are not able to concentrate urine and thus causes an increase in urination. In addition, affected animals can not get rid of the body's waste products so they tend to build up in the bloodstream, making them feel unwell.

Signs to look out for are increased thirst and urination, weight loss, general loss of condition, reduced appetite and an increase in bad breath. Obviously, these signs can be symptoms of other illnesses in an older animal so if you notice these signs in your pet you should get them checked over by a vet.

Diagnosis can be made from examination, blood and urine tests – especially important to differentiate from other diseases such as diabetes.

There are many cats that have been diagnosed with chronic renal failure that, with appropriate treatment, go on to live a good quality of life for many years.

It may be that the cat will need to go on a drip when the condition is first discovered. Many patients are quite dehydrated when they are first diagnosed. Once they are feeling better, they can go home on treatment, which may consist of tablets and a special diet.