

Kidney Disease

Chronic renal disease occurs when the kidney's ability to properly function is lost. This is one of the most common diseases seen in our older cats. This disease can be seen in any age, breed, or sex.

The most common sign that you will notice with your cat is a significant increase in water consumption and larger quantities of urine production. The body loses more fluids than are taken in and dehydration occurs, which causes excessive thirst. As the disease progresses you may notice weight loss, decreased appetite, weakness, bad breath, poor hair coat, vomiting, and oral lesions.

The kidneys function is to filter out waste products from our body and retain needed nutrients. They also are involved with red blood cell production and blood pressure.

Diagnosing early kidney disease is, unfortunately, difficult. Changes in blood tests do not show disease until after 65-75% of the kidneys have stopped working properly. Kidney disease is progressive and irreversible. The prognosis varies dramatically by the time of detection.

There are treatments that can help extend the quality and time of an affected cat's life. With early disease, owners can be instructed how to give additional fluid support by learning to give fluids under the skin. More severe cases often require intravenous fluid administration over several days in the hospital. Proper nutritional support, various medications, and fluid therapy are all methods to extend life.

Diets can also help to slow the progression by lessening the workload of the kidneys. Moist foods can further help as the water content is quite high and helps to maintain better hydration.

*** Ensuring that there is plenty of fresh water readily available is very important to prevent dehydration. ***



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