

## **Appetite Stimulation**

Build up of waste products in the bloodstream may lead to finicky behavior and loss of appetite. Because of this fact, there are differing thoughts on the value of special renal diets. Our number one criteria when treating renal failure is to make sure the patient is taking in enough calories. A special renal diet will not be effective if the patient will not eat it. At this point in the treatment, it is preferable to feed the patient a diet that is healthy and palatable. If necessary, an appetite stimulant may be added to ensure the patient is consuming enough food. This appetite stimulant may be given daily or every other day as needed. Appetite stimulants are tolerated very well and generally have no secondary effects.

## **Treatment Goals**

Monitoring a patient with chronic renal failure is crucial. Your veterinarian will recommend a program including periodic blood work, urinalysis, and body weight checks. The ultimate treatment goal is to maintain body weight and to improve the quality of life for as long as possible.

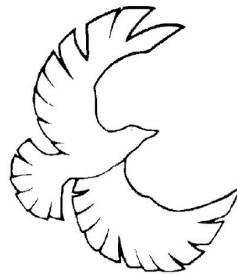
Newport Hills Animal  
Hospital

## **Chronic Renal Failure**

### **How is it diagnosed?**

Chronic renal failure is diagnosed through blood testing and a urinalysis. Testing for elevated levels of BUN and Creatinine tell us if these waste products are present in the blood and not being filtered out properly by the kidneys. A urinalysis tests the kidney function by telling us if the urine is properly concentrated or not. Although your pet may be producing urine regularly, if these kidney indicators are found to be elevated in the bloodstream your pet is experiencing kidney failure.

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## **What is chronic renal failure?**

Chronic renal failure is the most common debilitating illness of older cats. The symptoms can include weight loss, increased water intake, and gastrointestinal problems such as ulcers, vomiting and diarrhea. Occasionally these symptoms may be complicated further by the presence of a secondary bacterial infection of the bladder.

Chronic renal failure is a slow, progressive disease that cannot be stopped. While research veterinarians are unsure of the exact cause of this illness, we are able to offer treatment to prolong and improve the quality of your pet's life.

## **How is chronic renal failure treated?**

There are several treatments available depending upon the severity of the problem. Treatment generally begins with fluid therapy, and may include potassium supplementation, appetite stimulation, phosphorous binding and antacids.

## **Fluid Therapy**

Although we are unsure of the mechanism behind it, extra hydration on a daily basis improves kidney perfusion and helps improve excretions and preserve the nephrons. Subcutaneous fluids are given from one to three times daily in varying amounts depending upon the size of the pet and the severity of the kidney failure.

Subcutaneous fluids are given either by injection or by venoset underneath the skin between the shoulder blades. Needles need to be changed each time fluids are given, however, syringes and venosets can be changed twice a month.

## **Antacid Therapy**

Pets experiencing chronic kidney failure commonly suffer from stomach ulcerations. Antacids given once daily can minimize the symptoms and make your pet more comfortable.

## **Potassium Supplementation**

One of the common causes of muscle weakness and heart problems in cats experiencing kidney failure is a lack of potassium. Potassium supplementation can be achieved by either oral supplementation, or by adding potassium to the fluids given subcutaneously. Either method of administration is effective and the client is usually allowed to choose the method easiest for them.

## **Phosphorous Binding**

Phosphorous is a common mineral found in all foods. In pets with renal impairment, ingestion of a normal diet can lead to a buildup of phosphorous in the bloodstream. This buildup can affect your pet's energy level and overall wellbeing. The resulting lethargy and lack of appetite can be controlled by giving phosphorous binding medication twice daily with food.