

Kidney Disease



What is kidney disease and what are the symptoms?

Kidney disease is any damaging process within the kidney. Your pet's kidneys filter and remove "waste materials" from the blood stream. Kidney disease can affect any pet, but is one of the most common medical problems of older pets, especially cats, and is one of the leading causes of death for older pets. Unfortunately, signs of decreased kidney function are usually not evident until more than two thirds of the total kidney function has been lost. Once kidney damage is present, regeneration of kidney tissue does not occur. Kidney disease destroys the kidney's ability to perform properly. Waste material accumulates in the blood, which can result in:

- Loss of appetite
- Increased thirst
- Excessive urine production
- Poor hair coat
- Depression and/or vomiting
- Weight loss
- Weakness
- Bad breath (halitosis)
- Fatigue
- Stress on other vital organs

These signs may appear suddenly or develop slowly over time, and unfortunately are not specific to kidney disease.

How will my doctor know if my pet has kidney disease?

Your pet's doctor will make a diagnosis of kidney disease based on your pet's health history, clinical signs, and clinical evaluation. Clinical evaluation may include blood work, urinalyses (provides information about your pet's kidney function), radiographs or even ultrasound. These tests will help your doctor determine how well your pet's kidneys are functioning.

How will my doctor treat my pet for kidney disease?

Your pet's doctor will determine the proper immediate treatment for your individual pet, which may include hospitalization, fluid therapy, as well as diet changes and medication. Kidney disease can cause other diseases such as high blood pressure, which may also need to be addressed. Kidney disease is usually progressive, but proper therapy and help from your pet's doctor may slow the disease and help ensure your pet maintains a high quality of life. Pets with kidney disease may require routine exams, blood work, urinalyses and other services as outlined by your doctor.

What can I do to help my pet?

• Increase your pet's water intake

- Pets with kidney disease are at risk of becoming dehydrated.
- Increase the number of water bowls and refill often.
- Many pets enjoy actively running water, and pet water fountains can be found in PetSmart® and other pet stores for a reasonable price.
- Your doctor may recommend feeding canned food which has a higher water content.

• Increase urination

Dogs

- Increase the number of trips outside. While female dogs typically empty their bladders completely when they urinate, male dogs often only urinate small amounts at a time, keeping a reservoir available for marking territory. It may help with male dogs to take them for a long walk before going to work or bed, allowing them to completely empty their bladders.

Cats

- Consider adding additional litter boxes.
- Clean litter box daily to encourage use.

For additional information, please contact your Banfield medical team.

Should I feed my pet a different diet?

Royal Canin® has developed a special diet strictly to help pets suffering from kidney disease, Renal LP Modified™ and Renal MP Modified™. These diets are specifically designed with restricted phosphorus levels and reduced protein contents to aid in the dietary management of chronic renal failure in dogs and cats. It is important to feed only this diet to your pet, unless otherwise instructed by your doctor. Your Banfield doctor will determine if the Royal Canin kidney diets are best for your pet or if another therapeutic diet is more suitable. Always consult your Banfield doctor before trying a different diet.

Can kidney disease be prevented?

Acute kidney disease (rapid onset) is often due to ingestion of common household poisons such as antifreeze, pesticides, heavy metals, herbicides, solvents or toxic plants. Exposure to any of these items should be considered a medical emergency! Seek veterinary help immediately. Dangerous household items should be stored up out of reach of inquisitive noses and child hands to protect the whole family. Chronic kidney disease (persisting for a long time) can be caused by a wide variety of factors, including bacterial infections, kidney stone formation, poor diet and genetic predisposition. **Bi-annual physical exams and routine blood work performed by your pet's doctor will help identify any symptoms of kidney disease so it can be caught early.** As always, if you have any questions or concerns about the health of your pet, please contact your Banfield doctor.



For additional information, please contact your Banfield medical team.