

Caring for your Dog with Cushing's Disease

Contact Information

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ADRENAL GLAND



KIDNEY

What is Cushing's Disease?

Cushing's disease, also known as Hyperadrenocorticism, is a problem which causes your dog's adrenal glands to make too much of a hormone called cortisol. This happens either because the adrenal glands, which are two little glands sitting in front of the kidneys inside the abdomen, get out of control and make too much cortisol because the pituitary gland on the underside of the brain stops controlling the work of the adrenal glands properly.

Dogs with Cushing's Disease often feel very thirsty and very hungry. They need to wee a lot and tend to gain a lot of weight. Cushing's disease disturbs the blood sugar levels, so they might become Diabetic. It also reduces the body's ability to fight disease.

How is Cushing's Disease diagnosed?

We usually suspect a dog has Cushing's Disease following a blood test to check out why they are drinking so much. To diagnose Cushing's disease we need an ACTH (adrenocorticotrophic hormone) stimulation test which measures the effect of stimulating the adrenal glands on cortisol production. This requires two blood samples, one before and one after an injection of synthetic ACTH. A dog needs to spend a few hours with us for this test to be performed.

How often should I bring my pet in for a check-up?

Once your dog has been on medication for 4 weeks, we need to run a blood test to check the dose of medication is correct for your dog. This is because the dose of medication varies from dog to dog, so this repeat test is to fine tune our treatment to suit your pet. This sample needs to be taken about two hours before the next dose of medication is due to be given. This is why we ask you to give the medication in an evening so we can take a sample a couple of hours before the dose is due.

Once we have arrived at the best dose for your dog we will need to repeat this test every 6 months because most dogs with Cushing's Disease tend to need a gradually increasing dose as they get older.

PATIENT DETAILS

Name of patient:



How is Cushing's Disease treated?

Whether this problem is caused by a malfunction in the pituitary or adrenal glands the treatment is the same.

Medications your pet may be prescribed to manage the condition:

Vetoryl capsules or trilostane liquid are used to control the effects of Cushing's Disease. This controls but does not cure the problem so needs to be given life-long. These medications contain the enzyme-inhibitor trilostane, which blocks excessive steroid production. Treatment with this drug will start to reverse some of the original signs you may have noticed in your dog, for example, drinking and urinating more. However, if we start your pet on treatment and they start having vomiting, diarrhoea, weight, or energy loss then please let us know.

Does Cushing's Disease affect the long-term health of my pet?

Dogs with this condition are at increased risk of developing diabetes, infections in the urine, kidney, or skin as well as bladder stones. However, if you use the recommended treatment prescribed for your pet and keep them under regular medical supervision, the condition can successfully be managed so your pet can fulfil a healthy and happy life.

FOLLOW UP APPOINTMENT/BLOOD RETEST

Please bear in mind when making the appointment that we will need to test the blood cortisol levels 2 hours before you usually give your medication.

Please let us know if you are unable to attend the above appointment and we will arrange an alternative day/time.