



Newsletter

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Summer 2013

Focus on: Kidney Disease

Kidney Disease is a fairly common disease in older animals and one which people often worry about. The following aims to provide some extra information on the condition but feel free to call into the practice and ask our staff for more information.

Kidney disease (also known as renal disease/renal insufficiency) can have a variety of causes. In younger animals it is often due to either ingestion of a substance toxic to the kidneys eg: anti-freeze, ibuprofen, lilies in cats or to a defect they were born with.

In older animals, especially cats, it is more often due to a gradual deterioration in the health of the kidneys, most commonly caused by an acquired inflammatory condition. Dogs and cats, like humans, are born with more kidney tissue than is needed and so signs of disease are not seen until over two thirds of total functional kidney tissue has been lost.

Signs of kidney disease include: weight loss, reduced appetite, increased thirst and increased urination, vomiting and mouth ulcers. Other signs such as high blood pressure and anaemia are less obvious. Diagnosis of kidney disease is made through testing of blood and urine samples and screening for this is one of the reasons we include a yearly blood sample on our ViPEXtra Health Plan. Changes in the blood and urine will be seen before signs of illness become apparent so screening tests will help us detect it early.

Unfortunately, other than avoiding ingestion of toxins, little can be done to avoid the development of kidney disease and it is not possible to repair scarred non-functional kidney tissue.

However the good news is there are a variety of treatment options aiming to protect the remaining functioning kidney tissue and keep it healthy for as long as possible. The earlier the disease is detected the better as there will be more functional tissue.

The first step is to make sure there are no concurrent diseases which are increasing the work the remaining kidney tissue has to do. Just as in people, conditions such as high blood pressure and hyperthyroidism increase the pressure at which blood is pumped through the kidneys and can speed up further damage.

The mainstay of ongoing therapy in chronic kidney disease (CKD) is the feeding of a special diet. These commercial diets are carefully formulated to provide restricted levels of high quality protein which reduces the amount of protein breakdown products the kidneys have to excrete. They also have reduced levels of phosphate, which tends to accumulate in pets with CKD and makes them feel unwell. Reduced sodium levels aim to try and reduce the risk of high blood pressure developing, while increased levels of potassium and B vitamins replace those which are commonly lost in the urine of pets with CKD. In addition the diets have increased numbers of calories to help maintain weight. Modern kidney diets are increasingly palatable and with gradual introduction most pets will eat them well.

If your pet consistently refuses the food there are some treatments such as phosphate binders and potassium supplements which can be added to normal cat food to make it more 'kidney friendly'. There are also some appetite stimulants available to kick start poor appetites.

Depending on the stage of the disease your pet may also need additional medications to reduce protein loss through the kidneys or to control high blood pressure. Because their urine is more dilute than normal, dogs and cats with kidney disease are also more susceptible to bouts of bacterial cystitis which require antibiotic treatment.

Dogs and cats often present to us with an acute kidney crisis on top of ongoing chronic kidney disease. This can be triggered by a number of things but results in them becoming acutely dehydrated and requiring intravenous fluid therapy. Most patients need at least 48 hours in hospital to fully rehydrate them and to reduce the levels of toxins in the bloodstream.

Some cats are amenable to having fluids given under the skin. Our nurses can teach you how to do this and this can help keep cats with more severe disease better hydrated at home.

Ultimately however, kidney disease is a terminal condition and not every treatment option will be appropriate for every pet. We are always here to talk through the various options and help make the best decisions for you and your pet.



Dogs Die in Hot Cars



Every year the RSPCA publishes material to remind people not to leave their dogs alone in the car, even for short periods, but year on year fatalities are still seen.

When the temperature outside is 22°C/72°F, the temperature within a car can reach 47°C/117°F within 60 minutes. Dogs have to pant to keep cool and the confines of a car, even with a window cracked open, do not allow enough air flow for this to function properly and they will quickly overheat. You never know if you may be unexpectedly delayed so never risk leaving your dog in the car and always remember to take water with you in warm weather.

Cat Friendly Practice



The small animal department at Endell Veterinary Group was recognised as a Gold Standard Cat Friendly Practice by FAB Cats in 2007. FAB Cats has now become part of the International Society of Feline Medicine and we are currently applying for ISFM Cat Friendly Clinic certification.

Becoming a cat friendly clinic means that we adhere to the ISFM standards. These are designed to ensure that as well as getting an excellent standard of clinical care your cat also has as stress free visit to the vets as possible.

For example, where many practices house cats and dogs in the same room we have a separate cat ward as well as an isolation facility. This allows timid cats to be in quieter environment and our cages are large enough to allow beds and boxes to be placed in them to provide hiding places.

The practice is an ISFM member which gives us access to additional training resources specifically tailored to cats.

Pensioners Club

Are you eligible to join our Pensioners Club? Any clients who are pensioners are eligible to join our Pensioners Club - members qualify for a 5% discount on consultations, vaccinations and flea and worm medication. Discounts are also available on most of our food range, common blood and urine tests, long term medications for heart and joint diseases and on common dental treatments. Discounts apply for any case seen Monday to Saturday during normal working hours.



Are You A Member of Our Pet Health Plan Club Yet?

The Endell Veterinary Group Pet Health Plan offers an easy, cost effective way to meet your pet's essential healthcare needs. We believe that preventative health care is an important part of pet ownership; things like vaccines and parasite control are important factors in helping your pet have a long and healthy life. As well as vaccines, wormers and flea control, the plan provides a six-monthly check up to catch any problems early, something that becomes increasingly important as your pet ages. This is not the same as pet insurance but allows you to save money and spread the cost of preventative health care for your pet and works well in conjunction with a good insurance policy.

What's included?

For a regular monthly fee your pet receives:

- Twice yearly health assessments
- Full routine annual vaccination
- Full worming program for cats and dogs for effective year round protection against round and tape worm (includes lungworm)
- All year round flea control for cats and dogs
- Parasite program for rabbits for *E cuniculi*
- Annual health screen blood test
- Insurance claim forms completed free of charge

In addition, you get discounts on the following:

- Routine consultations
- Neutering
- Microchips
- Dental treatments
- Additional vaccinations
- Royal Canin and Hill's food



Ordering Food and Medications

We have changed the way we order your pets' medications and food. We have found that holding a lot of stock means that many products go out of date on the shelf. To try and combat this we are ordering most medicines and foods from our wholesaler only as required. In order to save yourself a wasted journey in to the practice, we ask that you please telephone us in advance to give us 48 hours' notice to order your food or medication.



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Endell Veterinary Group Small Animal