

Chronic Renal Disease in Dogs

Overview

Chronic renal (kidney) disease (CRD) can be a common problem in all breeds. The digestion of food produces waste products, which are carried by blood to the kidneys to be filtered and excreted in the form of urine. When the kidneys fail, they are no longer able to remove these waste products, and toxins build up in the blood producing clinical signs of kidney disease.

While CRD can affect all breeds of any age, the prevalence increases with age. CRD affects almost every body system causing many changes throughout the body and usually results in the following:

- abnormal filtration of blood and retention of waste materials
- failure of erythropoietin production, a hormone that stimulates red blood cell production
- disturbance of fluid, electrolyte, and acid-base balance

CRD can be caused by several different processes including:

- inflammatory disease
- infection
- poor blood flow and lack of oxygen
- immune system abnormalities
- cancer (neoplasia)
- toxins

Clinical Signs to Watch for

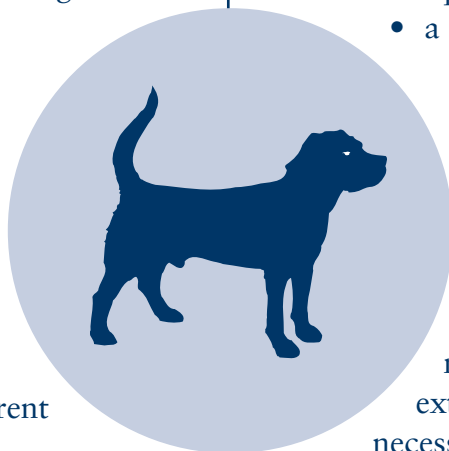
- increased thirst
- excessive drinking
- lethargy
- vomiting
- anorexia (loss of appetite)

- weakness
- weight loss
- increased urination
- lack of coordination when walking

Diagnosis

Diagnostic tests are needed to recognize CRD and exclude other diseases. These tests include:

- blood tests
- urinalysis
- radiographs/abdominal ultrasound
 - a complete medical history
 - a complete physical exam



Treatment

Although there is no cure for CRD, early detection can slow the progression of the disease. CRD can be a life threatening condition that may require hospitalization in extremely ill pets. Fluid therapy may be necessary to help rehydrate your pet. Anorexia resulting from gastric ulceration can often occur in chronic renal failure therefore antacids and appetite stimulants are often used to help encourage your pet to eat. A dietary change to a kidney friendly diet is often recommended to help manage your pet's renal disease. Regular rechecks of your pet's kidney values are also necessary to determine the course of the disease and to make any adjustments in your pet's treatment.