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SYMPTOMS

- Increased water consumption
- Excessive urination (in chronic cases)
- Lack of appetite
- Lethargy
- Poor coat condition
- Weight loss
- Vomiting
- Dehydration & Reduced urine production (*in acute cases*)



DEXTER SUGGESTS

Check out these books:

- *Dr. Pitcairn's Complete Guide to Natural Health For Dogs & Cats*
- *The Nature of Animal Healing*
- *The New Holistic Way for Dogs & Cats*

Kidney Health in Dogs

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF CRD?

The list at the left is short but significant. By the time you see these symptoms the problem has advanced, and you should have your dog seen by a vet immediately for a thorough exam, including blood and urine analysis. There can already be 50% loss of function by the time a blood test reveals a problem.

WHAT ARE THE CAUSES OF CHRONIC KIDNEY DISEASE (CRD or CRF)?

Causes include: genetic or congenital abnormalities, urinary tract obstructions, diabetes, poisons, trauma, infections, and poor quality diet. In older dogs it's often difficult to know the exact cause. Onset in older dogs is usually gradual, though not inevitable, so preventative care is important.

SKIP THE DRY FOOD

No matter what the cause of the kidney dysfunction, dry food should be eliminated or greatly reduced from the diet. Dogs bodies are really designed to eat a diet based on capturing and eating a whole animal which is 70% water, whereas dry food is only about 8% water. Eating only dry food can cause low-level dehydration, with overly-concentrated urine and improper pH. This predisposes them to kidney failure, bladder infections, and bladder stones. No matter how you look at it, the protein in dry food is much harder for their system to process.

DIET & EARLY STAGE KIDNEY DISEASE

Contrary to popular belief, low protein diets are not appropriate for early stage kidney disease in dogs. In fact, it may be harmful.

Because it is considered a progressive disease, a dog's decline may be attributed to the disease alone, rather than the high carbohydrate, low-protein diet. There have never been independent and thorough studies done showing the long-term benefits of a low-protein diet in dogs that justify this way of feeding (most studies are sponsored by pet food companies to justify their products as compared to equally inappropriate "normal" diets).

DOGS NEED (HIGH QUALITY) PROTEIN

While they may not require the same high levels of protein that cats do, dogs are designed to make use of protein as a source of energy to function and repair their bodies. It's important to provide high-quality protein, which means animal sources like meat and eggs that are not heavily processed. Restricting protein by too much can lead to a weakened state that is more vulnerable to disease. Dogs eating appropriately high levels of protein may exhibit slightly higher than "normal" BUN levels in their urinalysis. Talk with your veterinarian about this, and if necessary consult with a veterinarian who is more accustomed to analyzing the data of animals fed raw food



PRODUCTS

- My Perfect Pet Low Phosphorus Lamb Formula
- Vetriscience Renal Essentials
- AminAvast
- Answers Fermented Fish Broth
- Mushroom Matrix MRM Formula
- Animal Essentials Liver Defense
- Animal Essentials Senior Support
- Herbal Energetics Pet Boost
- Animal Essentials Calcium
- Pet's Friend Eggshell Calcium

diets. If you feed fresh food it's important to provide sufficient variety in the diet because each ingredient has a specific nutrient profile (so a high meat diet will be heavily influenced by the specific meat you feed).

LOW PHOSPHORUS

While severe CRD may require low protein, low phosphorus is essential for any pet with CRD. Cooked egg whites can be chopped up and added to a dog's wet food diet to "dilute" the phosphorus in the meal. This is an easy way to ensure adequate protein while lowering phosphorus. You can also talk with your veterinarian about powdered phosphorus binders that can be added to wet food. Dogs on raw food can be fed calcium derived from eggshell or kelp instead of bones, because those sources are lower in phosphorus. There is also a low-phosphorus lamb-based diet from My Perfect Pet.

ADD OMEGA-3 FATS

Pets with CRD need moderate to high amounts of fat to provide them with energy they are missing from reduced protein, and benefit from the addition of fish oil for the omega-3 EFAs. Studies have shown that fish body oil slows the progression of kidney disease in comparison to vegetable oils like flax.

SUPPORT THE LIVER

The liver is your pet's other filtering organ. If the kidneys aren't working well it's especially important to support liver function. When the liver is working well the burden on the kidneys is reduced. If your dog has other health problems that require medication or is in severe kidney failure, be sure that your veterinarian is part of the team deciding on whether to use herbs to support liver function. Generally speaking, Dandelion and Milk Thistle are very safe herbs to use (Dandelion Root is high in potassium, which can become depleted with excessive urination symptoms).

KIDNEY-SPECIFIC SUPPLEMENTS

Some supplements safely benefit the kidneys. The ones we recommend specifically for kidney disease are VetrScience Renal Support, AminAvast, Answers Fermented Fish Broth, and Mushroom Matrix MRM Formula. Consult with your veterinarian if your dog is on medications.

THE DOG WON'T EAT!

One of the side-effects of CRD is loss of appetite, but they must maintain their weight. Pets with CRD need very appetizing foods, and benefit from smaller meals fed more frequently. Low protein foods are often rejected, so if your dog is required to restrict protein due to advanced disease then you need to get creative by adding stews and toppings. These "picky" dogs can definitely become protein deficient if they are eating very little on a protein-restricted diet.

DON'T DISCOUNT THE EFFECTS OF EMOTIONAL STRESS ON KIDNEY ISSUES

Flower Essences, Reiki, and other methods of stress reduction are an important part of treating chronic kidney & bladder issues. They also benefit from treatments like acupressure and acupuncture.

If your dog has been diagnosed with kidney problems it's important to work with your vet, and to have regular check-ups to monitor their kidney function.