

Kidney Disease in Cats

What is Kidney Disease?

The kidneys play a crucial role in filtering waste from the blood, maintaining hydration, and balancing electrolytes. Chronic kidney disease (CKD) is a common condition in cats, especially as they age, leading to gradual loss of kidney function. Acute kidney disease, on the other hand, occurs suddenly due to toxins, infections, or other underlying causes.

Symptoms of Kidney Disease

- Increased thirst and urination
- Weight loss
- Decreased appetite
- Vomiting or nausea
- Lethargy
- Poor coat condition
- Bad breath (sometimes with a uremic odor)
- Weakness or muscle loss

When to Test for Kidney Disease

Routine screening for kidney disease is recommended:

- **For senior cats (7+ years old):** Annual bloodwork and urinalysis can help detect kidney disease early.
- **If your cat shows symptoms:** Any signs of increased thirst, weight loss, or vomiting should prompt testing.
- **Before anesthesia or major procedures:** Kidney function testing ensures your cat can safely undergo sedation or surgery.

Diagnostics: To diagnose kidney disease, we perform:

- **Bloodwork (Chemistry Panel & CBC):** Evaluates kidney function and detects elevated kidney values such as BUN and creatinine.
- **SDMA Test:** Detects kidney disease earlier than traditional blood tests.
- **Urinalysis:** Assesses kidney concentration ability and checks for protein or infections.
- **Blood Pressure Measurement:** High blood pressure is common in cats with kidney disease.

Treatment & Management

While kidney disease is not curable, early diagnosis and proper management can significantly improve quality of life. Treatment may include:

- **Dietary Management:** Prescription kidney diets help reduce strain on the kidneys.
- **Fluid Therapy:** Subcutaneous (under-the-skin) fluids help maintain hydration.
- **Common Medications:**
 - **Amlodipine** – For high blood pressure
 - **Cerenia or Ondansetron** – For nausea and vomiting

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- **Mirtazapine** – Appetite stimulant
- **Benazepril or Telmisartan** – To manage protein loss in urine
- **Phosphate Binders (Epakitin, Aluminum Hydroxide)** – Help reduce phosphorus buildup
- **Potassium Supplements** – If potassium levels drop too low
- **Regular Monitoring:** Routine bloodwork and urinalysis help track disease progression and adjust treatment as needed.

If you notice any symptoms of kidney disease in your cat, schedule an appointment with us for an evaluation. Early intervention can make a significant difference!

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