



EASTGATE VETERINARY CENTRE

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CHRONIC RENAL FAILURE IN CATS

The kidneys remove waste products and extra water from the bloodstream and excrete them from the body in the form of urine. The waste products in the bloodstream come from the normal breakdown of active muscle and from the food your cat eats. In addition to removing waste products the kidneys regulate the body's level of many electrolytes and minerals such as sodium, phosphorus and potassium. Another key role of the kidneys is blood pressure regulation.

Chronic renal failure is a progressive loss of the ability of the kidneys to excrete these waste products, concentrate urine and conserve electrolytes. Waste products (toxins) accumulate in the bloodstream and produce some of the clinical signs of kidney disease i.e. poor appetite, weight loss, increased thirst, increased urination, vomiting, and sometimes smelly breath. The inability to concentrate urine can lead to dehydration which in turn reduces blood flow to the kidneys further. In the early stages the signs may be subtle such as just drinking a little more. It is not possible to repair the damage once it has occurred but we can support the kidneys to try and slow further progression.

Often the first step in the management of chronic kidney disease is to have your cat in the practice for 24 hours on an intravenous drip. This rehydrates the cat and essentially flushes the toxins out of the kidneys by increasing blood flow to the kidneys and increasing urine output. A drip is generally tolerated well by cats. Often after this 24h period on fluids we will take another blood sample to look at the same metabolites again (urea and creatinine), in order to check they have been successfully lowered by the fluids, and to provide a baseline for further monitoring. This fluid therapy may need to be repeated in the future.

Once your cat has had this fluid therapy, or if for some reason this is not possible, we usually recommend starting them on a special renal diet long term to support the kidneys. The foods we can prescribe for your cat have reduced phosphorus content, restricted content of protein but high quality protein, high energy density using non-protein sources, high levels of anti-oxidants and are highly palatable. We can sell you food in wet pouches or dry food to suit your cat's dietary preferences.

Katie Longmire is qualified in veterinary herbal medicine and can offer complementary herbal therapy to help in the management of chronic kidney disease, please ask for details.

From time to time, often every 6-12 months, we recommend a monitoring blood sample to check toxin levels are not building up again. Monitoring of weight is also recommended and sometimes blood pressure monitoring is indicated.

Please feel free to discuss your cat's treatment with any of the vets or nurses in the practice.

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