Kidney Disease in Senior Dogs: Signs, Symptoms, & Treatment

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff

Kidney Disease in Senior Dogs

The risk of kidney disease (renal failure) increases as a dog grows older. The condition can be either acute (occurs suddenly, signs can be severe) or chronic (slow onset with generalized signs).

Renal disease can be due to changes in the kidney, or it can result from the dysfunction of other organs. For example, if the heart is impaired, decreased blood flow to the kidneys impairs their ability to function properly.

Kidney health is measured through blood tests, urinalysis, and, in some cases, imaging techniques. These tests can identify the problem before physical signs of kidney disease are evident. One of the most frequent and early signs is an increase in water consumption and urination, but this generally does not occur until about 70% of the kidney function is lost.

If there is a problem with kidney function, your veterinarian may suggest changes in diet and lowered dosages of certain medications to decrease the stress on the diseased organ. With prompt diagnosis and proper treatment, acute kidney disease

tell-tale signs of kidney disease

- Increase in water consumption and urination
- Decreased urination (oliguria)
- Lack of urination (anuria)
- Voiding urine during the night (nocturia)
- Blood in urine (hematuria)
- Decreased appetite (anorexia)
- Vomiting
- Weight loss
- Lethargy
- Diarrhea
- Hunched over posture or reluctance to move
- Poor or unkempt hair coat

It is important to note that some of the above symptoms also accompany other disorders, such as liver or

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may be reversible; chronic kidney disease can be managed to give the dog additional months, or even years, of life, depending on the response to the treatment and the overall state of the animal's health.

pancreatic diseases and urinary tract disorders that do not involve the kidneys.

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