

Cushing's Disease Symptom Checklist

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff

Cushing's Disease (hyperadrenocorticism) is a condition that results from the chronic overproduction of too much glucocorticoid in the body. In the normal dog, the pituitary gland produces a hormone called ACTH, which stimulates the adrenal gland to produce the steroid hormone glucocorticoid necessary for the function of many systems in the body. If something goes wrong in the pituitary gland or adrenal gland and too much glucocorticoid is produced, then Cushing's Disease develops.

This is a very complicated disease with a wide range of symptoms and causes. As a result of the chronically-elevated glucocorticoids (steroids), the affected dogs develop a classic combination of dramatic clinical signs and lesions. The disease progresses slowly. A study showed that most dogs had at least one symptom of the disease from one to six years before the disease was diagnosed. Because the symptoms occur so gradually, the owner often attributes the changes to "old age." Some dogs will have only one symptom, while others may have many.

For dogs ultimately diagnosed with Cushing's Disease, hair loss was one of the most common reasons the owners first brought their dog in for evaluation.

Sometimes owners, in the stress of the moment, forget to tell their veterinarian relevant information about their pets. Here is a handy checklist to bring with you to your next veterinary appointment. Check the box beside the question if your dog experiences any of these symptoms.

Cushing's Disease Checklist

Check which symptoms your dog exhibits:

- Hair loss and thin skin
- Increased water consumption and urination
- Increase in appetite
- Abdominal enlargement

Once you have completed the checklist, print and take to your veterinarian so you can discuss the results together. In the event your veterinarian decides to prescribe medication to your dog, you may want to print off our [Prescription Authorization Form](#) and bookmark this information on [how to order a prescription](#) at Drs. Foster and Smith's Licensed Pharmacy, where you can save on all of your faithful friends' prescriptions.