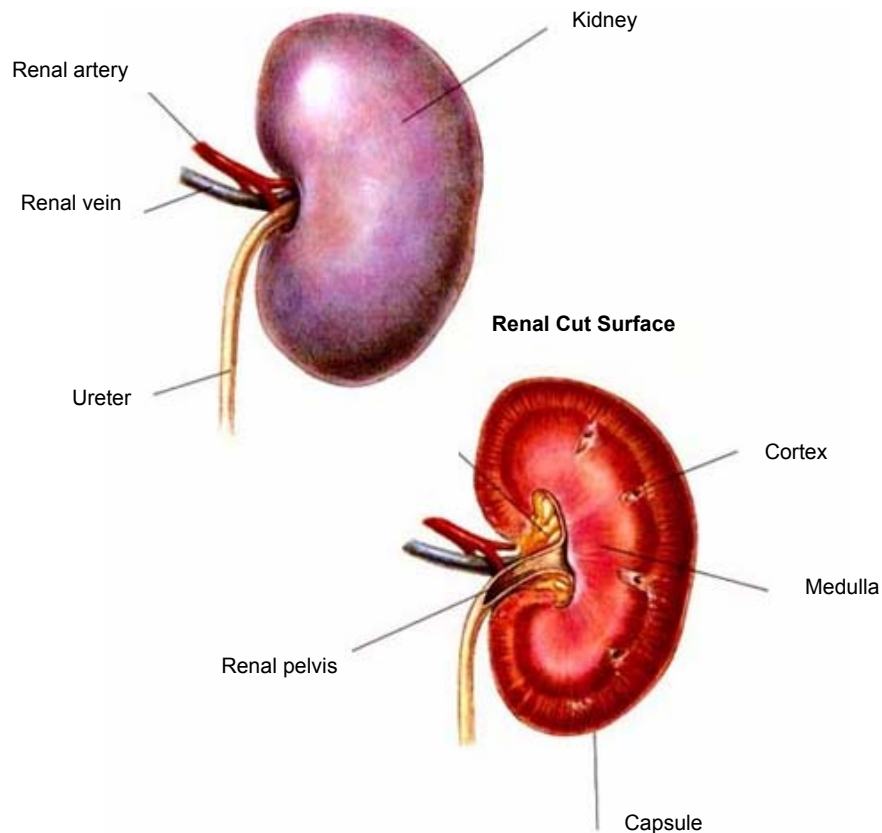




Reducing the Risks of Kidney Failure



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Many age-related changes in your pet's kidneys can't be prevented. However, the signs of kidney failure can often be successfully managed when the disease is caught early and the health risks are minimized. This client education sheet will help you learn more about the risks of kidney disease and will review your veterinarian's plan for keeping your pet healthy, as well as follow-up with the veterinary health care team.

Risk Factor Management for Kidney Disease

A risk factor is a condition or characteristic that predisposes an animal to disease. For example, high blood pressure in human beings increases the risk of stroke and heart and kidney failure. The importance of identifying risk factors is that sometimes the risk factor (high blood pressure, for example) can be eliminated or controlled to prevent or lessen the severity of the disease (stroke, for example). Veterinarians also recognize risk factors in pets. The extent to which such risk factors are managed will help determine the length and quality of your pet's life.

Risk Factors

As your dog or cat ages, its kidneys gradually deteriorates. As this deterioration progresses, your pet may gradually lose the ability to concentrate urine and maintain normal sodium, water, and acid-base balance. Chronic failure of the kidneys is the second leading cause of nonaccidental death in dogs and is also commonly seen in older cats. In pets with chronic renal failure, the kidneys are unable to properly excrete the breakdown products of protein, so these products accumulate in the blood. These pets are also susceptible to high blood pressure.

Risk factors for kidney disease include the following:

- Advanced age.
- Certain drugs such as anti-inflammatory drugs, which are commonly given to older pets to manage arthritis.
- Improper nutrition. Excess protein, phosphorus, and sodium in the pet's food may enhance the progression of renal damage.
- Other medical problems.
- Hypertension. High blood pressure can contribute to kidney disease.

Detecting Risk Factors

Frequent and complete veterinary checkups are especially important as your pet ages. Your veterinarian will be able to prepare a list of risk factors for your pet based on the history you provide, results of the physical examination and diagnostic studies, and his or her knowledge of disorders that commonly affect pets of similar age, breed, and sex.

Managing Risk Factors

The care your pet received throughout its life can help protect its health and minimize its health risks. As your pet ages, you should carefully follow your veterinarian's instructions for exercise, vaccinations, parasite control, dental care, grooming, nutrition, and routine examinations and diagnostic tests.

Nutritional Plan

As your pet ages your veterinarian may recommend a dietary change to reduce the nutritional risks that contribute to kidney disease and failure. Optimal nutrition provides the right amount of nutrients for tissue maintenance and repair. More important, optimal nutrition should reduce the risk to the kidneys associated with feeding excess sodium, protein, and phosphorus.

Foods that avoid these harmful excesses and provide proper nutrition for each life stage include Hill's® Science Diet® Adult for dogs and cats one to six years of age and Hill's® Science Diet® Senior for dogs and cats seven years of age and over.

If your pet is particularly at risk for kidney disease, your veterinarian may recommend a dietary product specifically formulated for kidney failure patients. Such foods include Hill's® Prescription Diet® Canine k/d® and Feline k/d® which contain reduced levels of protein, phosphorus, and sodium.

Transitioning Food

Unless recommended otherwise by your veterinarian, gradually introduce any new food over a seven-day period. Mix the new food with your pet's former food, gradually increasing its proportion until only the new food is fed.

If your pet is one of the few that doesn't readily accept a new food, try warming the canned food to body temperature, hand feeding for the first few days, or mixing the dry food with warm water (wait ten minutes before serving). However, do not add water to your cat's food. Feed only the recommended food. Be patient but firm with your pet. This is important because the success or failure of treatment depends to a large degree on strict adherence to the new food.

Presented as an educational service by



Home Care Instructions

Client's Name: _____

Patient's Name: _____

Medication(s): _____

Nutritional Recommendation: _____

Follow-Up Appointment: _____

(Hospital Stamp Area Above)

REGULAR VISITS WILL HELP OUR VETERINARY HEALTH CARE TEAM PROVIDE FOR YOUR PET'S BEST INTEREST.