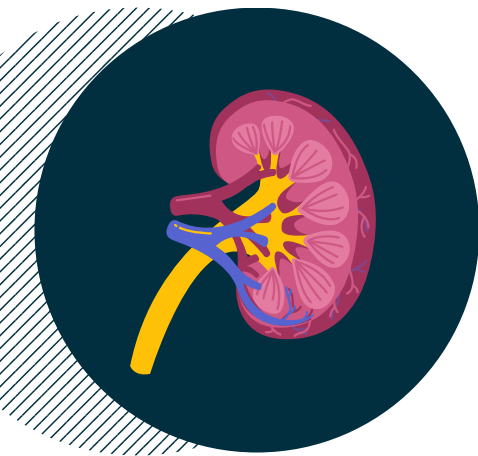


Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) in cats

What is CKD?

Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) is a condition commonly encountered in older cats, affecting up to 40% of cats over the age of 10. CKD occurs when there is long-standing damage to the kidneys, which impairs their ability to function. Possible causes include infection, toxicity, congenital conditions and cancer, though most commonly an underlying cause is not apparent.

Although CKD cannot be cured, we can use supportive treatments and lifestyle changes to increase your cat's quality of life and slow down progression of the disease.



What do the kidneys do?


The kidneys are important in maintaining water and salt balance, removing toxins from the body, maintaining normal blood pressure and producing hormones.

Cats with CKD lose more water through the kidneys so can easily become dehydrated. Toxins, which are usually filtered out, build up in the blood. Some cats also develop complications including anaemia, high blood pressure, urinary infections or high phosphorus and can lose protein in the urine.

What are the signs of CKD?

Cats may show some of the following signs:

- Increased thirst and urination
- Decreased appetite
- Weight loss
- Lethargy
- Poor hair / coat condition
- Vomiting



These signs may **develop** gradually or may **suddenly become worse.**

How is CKD diagnosed?

Blood and urine tests are used to make the diagnosis and your cat's blood pressure will be checked. In some cases, further tests such as imaging or biopsies are performed.

*We may prescribe medication for your cat prior to coming in for tests to help keep stress to a minimum.

How is CKD managed?

Making some changes at home can help to slow the progression of this condition:

- Help avoid dehydration by encouraging your cat to drink. Consider feeding wet food, having multiple water bowls, catching rain water and using water fountains.
- Feeding a specific therapeutic diet is important to slow progression of disease. Remember to make diet changes gradually and speak to your vet for advice if your cat refuses the recommended food.
- Medications may be required in individual cases to treat underlying problems or complications of CKD. Your vet can help plan how best to administer these.

How are cats with CKD monitored?

Repeat checks at regular intervals (every 3-6 months) are important to identify treatable complications as they arise.



As with all medical conditions, **the earlier we diagnose CKD, the better we can manage it.**



Always seek advice if you notice changes to your cat's appetite, thirst, weight or behaviour.