

Vets Park

for the pets in your life - your vet for life

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Cushing's Disease

Your dog has been diagnosed with hyperadrenocorticism (HAC) or Cushing's Disease. This means that the adrenal glands, situated near the kidneys are producing excessive levels of cortisol.

Cushing's Disease is usually caused by a benign tumour of the pituitary gland or, in rarer cases, a tumour of the adrenal glands themselves.

Treating Dogs with Cushing's Disease

Cushing's Disease cannot be cured but it can be treated successfully in most dogs. Lifelong treatment is vital to prevent the condition worsening which can lead to diabetes, clots on the lungs, kidney and urinary tract infection and pancreatic disease.

Treatment involves bringing the levels of cortisol in the blood back to normal.

This requires you to give your dog daily medication in the form of capsules **for life**. You cannot stop the medication when your dog looks better.

These capsules must be given whole and should not be crushed. Dosing in the morning, with food, usually gives better results.

You should wash your hands after handling your dog's medication.

Do not handle the medication if you are pregnant or trying to conceive.

You might want to take a photograph of your dog before treatment starts so we can monitor improvements in hair regrowth and a reduction in your dog's pot-belly, which should occur over the coming months.

After the initial 10 day stabilisation period we recommend repeat blood samples to check the cortisol levels (called an ACTH stimulation test) and we also need to make sure the liver and kidneys are working well.

These blood tests must be repeated at 4 weeks and 12 weeks after treatment has started and then every 3 months for life.

We will also ask you to monitor your dog for an improvement in clinical signs, such as drinking less, as well as performing these regular blood tests.

Close monitoring is vital in the early stages of treatment so we can be certain that the dose of the drug is correct. Over-suppression of the adrenal gland is very dangerous and so we must work together to make sure our chosen dose is appropriate for your dog, since every pet is unique.

You should continue to give your dog the medication even if you notice a dramatic improvement in your dog's symptoms. Remember we cannot cure this condition, only regulate it.

Follow up checks and blood tests every 3 months are vital. We are unable to issue written prescriptions or dispense medication without these regular check up appointments. This is for your dog's benefit.

Please do not forget to keep in touch with us if you have any concerns. You can email us at totpchelt@hotmail.co.uk for non-urgent advice or call 01242 517199 if matters seem more pressing.

Written estimates can be given for each test that may be needed.

Our approach is the gold standard for diagnosis, treatment and monitoring of dogs with Cushing's Disease. We understand that some of these procedures may be difficult for individual clients to afford. If this is the case please discuss this with the veterinary surgeon and we will work with you to reach a management plan we are all comfortable with.

see www.canine-cushings.co.uk