

TREATMENT

- Although in theory the tumours causing the condition could be removed the complications from such surgery can be significant, so most cases will be treated with medication
- Daily medication will be required and in most cases this will be for the rest of your pet's life
- Medication is usually given once daily in the morning with food, although some animals may require twice daily dosing. Monitoring tests are performed 4-6 hours after the dose of medication
- Your veterinary surgeon will advise you on the frequency of monitoring tests and the dose will be adjusted based on these tests and the improvement in clinical signs. Each dog is an individual and may require a lower or higher dose than originally prescribed
- Although uncommon, side effects to the medication can occur. If your dog develops any signs of illness while on the medication, stop treatment and contact your veterinary surgeon. Common side effects include vomiting, diarrhoea, lethargy and poor appetite.



Summary

Cushing's can in most cases be controlled to allow you and your dog to have a good quality of life. Many dogs can live for several years with the condition.

Regular monitoring will be required to ensure that your pet is on the correct dose of medication.

A reduction in signs of excessive drinking, urination and appetite usually occur within two weeks of treatment. Skin conditions and hair growth may take up to three to six months for a visible improvement.



XLVets Small Animal member veterinary practices work together to share experience, knowledge and ideas to ensure the highest levels of quality and care for their client's pets. XLVet member practices provide a compassionate and caring service for all pets and at the same time offer comprehensive and up-to-date treatment in all fields of veterinary medicine and surgery.



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CUSHING'S SYNDROME



Pets with this condition produce excessive amounts of hormones, especially cortisol, from the adrenal glands. It is usually the result of a tumour (most commonly benign) either in the pituitary gland at the base of the brain or in the adrenal glands. The adrenal glands are found in the abdomen close to the kidneys.

HOW TO RECOGNISE THE SIGNS

Most dogs with Cushing's syndrome drink more water than normal and urinate more frequently. Some dogs appear to be incontinent as a result of this.

An increased appetite is also common. Your pet may appear to be ravenous all the time. In addition, many cases develop a pot belly so appear to be putting on weight, due to the abdominal muscles becoming weaker.

Panting and lethargy are also signs that can be associated with the condition. Your pet may be less willing to go for walks and seem more breathless when they do go out.

Skin problems may occur. Some dogs develop bald patches or skin infections. The skin can appear to be thin especially over the belly area.

Female dogs also stop having overt seasons, i.e. become anoestrus.

Rarely, dogs may show signs of brain disease.

- Cushing's syndrome is seen more commonly in middle aged to older dogs and can be mistakenly believed to be part of the normal aging process. However, there are treatment options available which will improve your pet's quality of life
- Dogs with the condition are at increased risk of developing diabetes mellitus (sugar diabetes), infections in the urine or in the kidneys, and blood clots in the lungs

- This condition is one of the more common endocrine (hormonal) diseases in dogs. Treatment is generally used to control the signs of the disease rather than to produce a cure
- Several blood samples may be required to make a diagnosis of Cushing's syndrome and to rule out other possible causes. Your veterinary surgeon will be able to explain these to you
- Not every dog shows all the signs of Cushing's. Some only show one or two signs, especially in the early stages of the disease



HOW YOUR VET WILL MAKE A DIAGNOSIS

Although the clinical signs are suggestive of Cushing's syndrome, a range of tests will be required to confirm the condition and to rule out other possible diseases. These may include:

- Biochemistry and haematology (routine screening blood tests)
- Urine sample
- ACTH stimulation test
- Low dose dexamethasone suppression test
- Radiography
- Ultrasonography

