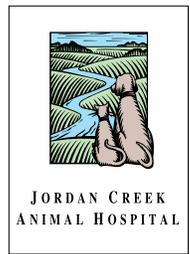




WINTER 2017 Gazette

☞ newsletter for people and their pets



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West Des Moines, Iowa 50265

in this issue:



Cushing's Syndrome
Canine Influenza
A Tribute to Rony
Movoflex
Iams Prescription Diets
Hospital News
Meet the Editors

Cushing's Syndrome in Dogs

What is Cushing's syndrome?

Cushing's syndrome, or hyperadrenocorticism, affects many middle-aged to older dogs. It is the most commonly diagnosed canine endocrine disorder, and is associated with overproduction of cortisol. Cortisol is produced by a small pair of glands located near each kidney, called adrenal glands. A hormone produced by the pituitary gland in the brain, called adrenocorticotropic hormone (ACTH), controls the production and release of cortisol from the adrenal glands. In appropriate quantities, cortisol is necessary for health. Cortisol plays an important role in your dog's ability to cope with stress and is also anti-inflammatory. Overproduction of cortisol can have harmful effects on your dog's internal organs and metabolism. Harvey Cushing was a neurosurgeon who originally gave his name to the disease. The collection of clinical signs resulting from the disease is known as Cushing's syndrome.

What causes Cushing's syndrome?

There are three mechanisms by which this disease can occur. Irrespective of the cause of Cushing's syndrome, the result is always that more cortisol is produced than is actually needed by the body. It is important to identify the cause, however, because the various forms are treated differently and have different prognoses.

Iatrogenic: This form of Cushing's syndrome occurs as a result of excessive administration of steroid or cortisone. This can occur from oral or injectable medications that are usually given for other medical reasons, but their excess use becomes detrimental.

Adrenal gland tumor: In 15-20% of cases, Cushing's syndrome is caused by a tumor in one or both of the adrenal glands, which produces excessive amounts of cortisol. If the tumor is benign, surgical removal can be curative. If the tumor is malignant, the prognosis is less favorable. More commonly affected breeds include Poodles, German Shepherds, Dachshunds, Labradors, and Terrier breeds.

Pituitary gland tumor: The most common cause of excess cortisol production (80-85% of cases) is a small benign tumor located in



the pituitary gland. The tumor cells produce a large amount of the hormone ACTH, which then causes the adrenal glands to overproduce cortisol. Less commonly, the pituitary tumor can be larger, which may cause other clinical signs and give the patient a less favorable prognosis.

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Clinical Signs of Cushing's Syndrome:

Increased or ravenous appetite

Increased thirst/water intake

Excessive urination with possible incontinence

Increased panting

Bloated or pot-bellied appearance to the abdomen

Lethargy, or lack of activity

Muscle wasting and weakness

Poor hair coat – hair loss, thin skin, and recurrent skin infections

The good thing is, rarely are dogs with Cushing's disease critically ill. Some of these symptoms can be mistaken for part of the normal aging process, as they can happen very slowly over several months, and are usually in middle aged to older dogs.

sis. Some of the more commonly affected breeds may include Poodles, Dachshunds, Terrier breeds, Beagles, and Maltese. Seventy-five percent of dogs with pituitary-dependent Cushing's disease weigh less than 45 pounds.

How is Cushing's disease diagnosed?

There is not one specific test that can identify Cushing's disease 100% of the time. In general, your veterinarian may start the diagnostic process by doing a complete blood count (CBC), a chemistry panel to assess organ function, a urinalysis, and sometimes a urine cortisol: creatinine ratio (UCCR). Common abnormalities of these tests may support a diagnosis of Cushing's disease, but are not confirmatory. If after these initial preliminary tests, Cushing's disease is still strongly suspected, your veterinarian may recommend moving forward with more specific testing directed at your dog's cortisol levels/production and adrenal glands.

The two most commonly used blood tests to confirm Cushing's syndrome are called an ACTH stimulation test and a low dose dexamethasone suppression (LDDS) test. Both are blood tests that require your dog to be fasted for 8-12 hours, and to stay in the hospital for 2-8 hours, depending on which test is performed. The LDDS test may also help in identifying whether your dog has a pituitary or adrenal tumor.

Lastly, your veterinarian may suggest x-rays and abdominal ultrasound be performed to evaluate the adrenal glands, liver, and other organ structures.

What is the treatment for Cushing's syndrome?

Cushing's syndrome can impact the quality of life of both the dog and owner. Not treating your dog for Cushing's

may put them at increased risk for: diabetes, pancreatitis, urinary tract infection, pulmonary thromboembolism (blood clot to the lungs), and high blood pressure.

Treatment of Cushing's disease is somewhat dependent on the cause:

Iatrogenic: Treatment involves discontinuation of the medication causing excess cortisol production in your dog. This usually will need to be done slowly under your veterinarian's supervision.

Adrenal gland tumor: Surgical removal of the affected gland is sometimes recommended for this form of Cushing's syndrome.

Pituitary gland tumor: The most common form of Cushing's disease we see can be successfully managed and controlled through oral medication and bloodwork monitoring. Usually the goal of medication is to control the symptoms of Cushing's syndrome and to help your dog maintain a good quality of life.

In summary, Cushing's disease is a common endocrine disorder that affects many adult dogs. Clinical signs can vary widely and develop slowly, so owners may confuse the symptoms with normal aging in their dog. The three forms of Cushing's disease all result in similar clinical signs, due to excess cortisol in your dog's body. Treatment of the various forms of Cushing's syndrome is specific to the type, but most commonly involves oral medication and close bloodwork monitoring by your veterinarian. Early diagnosis and treatment of Cushing's disease can greatly improve your dog's symptoms, and therefore your dog's quality of life. Contact us today if you are concerned about the possibility of Cushing's disease in your pet!

New Canine Influenza Protocol!

We have an exciting influenza vaccine update to share with all our clients, and particularly those clients who regularly board their pets with us. First, a little background on the canine flu.

History of Canine Influenza:

Until 2015, there was only one strain of influenza that affected dogs in the United States, the H3N8 strain. This flu mutated from a horse virus and spread to dogs at race tracks. In 2015, there was a huge outbreak of a new canine influenza virus. This newer strain of flu is H3N2. It had been present in Asia for several years and mutated from an avian flu virus. 2015 was the first time we saw H3N2 in the United States, and Chicago was hit particularly hard.

Both strains of flu are spread through respiratory secretions from coughing, barking, and sneezing. Infectious organisms can also survive on objects and clothing for 24-48 hours. Dogs at highest risk are those that spend time in areas frequented by other dogs, such as boarding and grooming facilities, veterinary clinics, and dog parks. Dogs can shed the H3N8 virus for up to 7-10 days. H3N2 has a much longer contagious period, and dogs can shed this virus for up to 24-26 days. Peak viral shedding occurs early in the infectious process, before dogs may even show signs of illness.

According to Merck Animal Health, as of June 2016, H3N8 has been confirmed in 41 states and the District of Columbia, and H3N2 has been confirmed in 30 states. In Iowa, we have seen both strains of influenza. Without a vaccine, every dog in a kennel facility is at risk of contracting the disease, and by the time the kennel realizes what is happening, it is often too late to protect the dogs, and up to 80% of dogs will get sick. Symptoms can range in severity from a mild fever and cough, to pneumonia and in rare cases, death. Most deaths occur in dogs with fragile immune systems, like puppies and geriatric dogs.

Immunization at JCAH:

In 2009, a vaccine became available for H3N8, and

our Jordan Creek Kennels began requiring vaccination for all boarding dogs. While both influenza strains exhibit similar symptoms, they are two separate viruses, and the original H3N8 vaccine provides no known protection against H3N2. In 2015, when a vaccine became available for H3N2, we began recommending this vaccine as well. As a result, some boarding pets were vaccinated for H3N8, some for H3N2, and some for both strains. It is important to note that vaccinated dogs may still contract the flu, but symptoms are generally milder. In addition, vaccinated dogs can still shed the virus, which is why it is so important to build a "herd immunity" in kennel settings.



This brings us to our exciting vaccine update – there is now a vaccine which includes both H3N8 and H3N2! What does this mean for your dog? Effective immediately, all dogs being vaccinated against influenza for the very first time will receive the new Bivalent (two strains in one) vaccine, with a booster two to four weeks later for full immunity. All dogs who have been previously vaccinated for both strains of flu will also get the new Bivalent vaccine when they are due for their annual booster.

For dogs that have been previously vaccinated for only one strain of flu (either H3N8 or H3N2), here is what will happen when their annual booster is due: the dog will receive the new Bivalent vaccine, and two to four weeks later, the dog will receive a booster of ONLY the flu strain that it has not been previously vaccinated for. We will do this so every dog is fully immunized against both strains. We realize this may cause minor inconvenience for our clients, so as an incentive to get your dog fully vaccinated, the single-strain booster will be given at a reduced price.

EXAMPLE: Toby has been receiving the H3N8 vaccine for a few years. Toby has never received the H3N2 vaccine. When Toby is due for his annual booster, he will receive the Bivalent vaccine. He is still fully immunized against H3N8, and has now received one immunization against H3N2. In two to four weeks, Toby will receive a booster of the H3N2 vaccine for \$14.55. Toby is now fully immunized against both flu strains, and in future years will only need the Bivalent vaccine given annually.



A TRIBUTE TO RONY 2002-2016

It is with many, very heavy hearts that we share the sad news of the passing of Officer Rony, the West Des Moines K-9 Police Dog. Rony started his career with the West Des Moines Police Department back in 2004. He was deployed over 900 times during his career. After retiring from the force in 2012, Rony spent his remaining years at home with Officer Brent Kock and his family. In 2013 Rony was honored for his service with an induction into the Iowa Animal Hall of Fame. Rony's life accomplishments, including the many lives he touched, is simply immeasurable. Rony's continuous hard work, loyalty to the community, dedication to the West Des Moines Police Department, and endless successes will never be forgotten. Our thoughts go out to the Kock family as well as the West Des Moines Police Department in this time of great loss.



MOVOFLEX: *A New Way to Move*

We have a new product to introduce called Movoflex. Movoflex is the latest advancement in joint supplements presented by Virbac, a veterinary pharmaceutical company. This product is similar to our S3 Synovial Chews in that it works to lubricate joints and provide better comfort to our patients suffering from joint discomfort. Movoflex is created with a unique blend of ingredients - one of the most innovative is using egg shell membrane in lieu of glucosamine and chondroitin. The biggest difference between our S3 Synovial Chews and Movoflex is that Movoflex does not need a "loading" dosage and can be given as a single chew once daily from the start. These highly palatable, easy to administer chews are readily accepted by dogs. In fact, Virbac is so sure your dog will love them that they are fully guaranteed. If your dog will not eat them, bring them back for full credit! Movoflex is available in 3 sizes: small (dogs under 40 pounds), medium (dogs 41-80 pounds), and large (dogs over 80 pounds). It is even suitable for dogs with certain dietary restrictions because these chews are free of gluten, sugar, shellfish, and salt. Ask a staff member if Movoflex is right for your pet!



Dr. Daniel Whitney joins the veterinarian team

Dr. Whitney was raised in West Des Moines, and grew up living above Jordan Creek Animal Hospital. He followed in his father's footsteps and graduated from Iowa State University, receiving his Bachelor of Science Degree in Animal Science in 2009, and his Doctorate of Veterinary Medicine in 2013. Dr. Whitney, his wife Danielle, and his spaniel mix Freddy have lived in Eagan, MN for the past 3 years. Seven months ago they welcomed their daughter Quinn to the family. Dr. Whitney is excited to be back in Iowa and have the opportunity to work alongside his dad. His professional interests include surgery, dentistry, and preventative care.

Monthly Meetings

The doctors and staff at Jordan Creek Animal Hospital feel that monthly employee meetings are essential to promoting communication and educational opportunities. Because of this, we will be closed from **1:30-2:40 PM** on the following **Wednesdays: January 18** and **March 22**.

Welcome Brooke and Jenny



Brooke grew up in Johnston, Iowa. She obtained her Bachelor of Science Degree in Animal Science from Iowa State University in 2013. She then went back to school for her Associate of Applied Sciences Degree in Veterinary Technology from Des Moines Area Community College in May of 2015.

Brooke has two cats at home, Gabriel and Nonny, and is hoping to get a dog next summer. When she is not at work, Brooke enjoys watching movies, going to the gym, tailgating for Iowa and Iowa State football games, traveling, spending time with her family, and spoiling her nephew.



Jenny grew up in a small town called Hardy, right outside of Humboldt, Iowa. She grew up a farm girl and enjoys all kinds of activities outside, including camping, horseback riding, hiking, and fishing. In 2016 she received her Associates of Applied Sciences Degree in Veterinary Technology from Des Moines Area Community College. She worked at a clinic in Des Moines while attending school and started at JCAH in October of 2016. Jenny has a cat named Mowgli (inspired by the Jungle Book), and hopes to be adopting a dog in the near future. She simply loves all kinds of animals!

New Sunday Boarding Checkout



Effective January 8, 2017, our Sunday boarding checkout time will change to 7:00 p.m. to better accommodate our client's schedules. We will no longer have a checkout at 6:00 p.m.!

Notice!

Iams Prescription Veterinary Diets Discontinued

We have important news to share that will affect quite a few of our clients! In 2014, Mars Petcare purchased the Iams and Eukanuba lines of pet food from Procter & Gamble. Mars also owns the Royal Canin brand of pet food. Mars has announced that as of January 1st, 2017, Iams Veterinary Formula prescription diets will be discontinued and will no longer be available for purchase. This includes the popular Intestinal and Weight Loss diets, as well as the Weight Loss Rewards dog treats. Mars, under the Royal Canin brand, does still plan to continue manufacturing the Iams Kangaroo and Oat novel protein diet, but it is likely that there will be temporary shortages during the transition period. If you are feeding your pet one of these diets, please speak with one of our staff members to help select a new food that is suited to your pet's individual needs. Some formulas are expected to remain available for a short period until the existing supply is exhausted. There is no word at this time about any discontinuation of commercial (non-prescription) formulas of Iams or Eukanuba pet food.



MEET THE STAFF/our editors for this issue of Pet Gazette



Dr. Rachel Varley, originally from Carroll, Iowa, received her bachelor's degree from Wartburg College in 2007. She went on to receive her Doctorate of Veterinary Medicine Degree from

Iowa State University in 2011. After graduation, she completed a rotating internship in surgery/internal medicine at a specialty and emergency hospital in Ohio. She came to Jordan Creek Animal Hospital in 2012.

Dr. Varley and her husband have a daughter, Claire, and a Rat Terrier named Paisley. Dr. Varley enjoys being outdoors, spending time with family and friends, and taking pictures.



Jodi grew up in the Des Moines area and received undergraduate and law degrees from the University of Iowa before deciding to go back to school to pursue a career

with animals. She worked part-time at JCAH while obtaining her Veterinary Technology Degree at Des Moines Area Community College, and has been a full-time staff member since graduating in May 2010.

Jodi shares her home with her two rescue pets, Australian Cattle Dog Curtis and cat Cappy. In her free time she enjoys hiking in the woods with Curtis, traveling to national parks, and going to concerts and movies.



Kat was born and raised in the Chicago area and is a first-generation Polish-American. Kat speaks Polish fluently! She attended Iowa State University and graduated in 2014 with a Bachelor's Degree in Animal Science. She

went on to work at a veterinary clinic in Iowa City and at the University of Iowa as an Animal Caretaker. Kat is happy to return to central Iowa with her boyfriend, Will. Together they have a cat named Twilight and a dog named Tavi.

Kat enjoys traveling outside of the country and exploring different cultures. In her free time she likes to rollerblade, bike ride, and spend time with friends.