



## **Hyperadrenocorticism advice sheet.**

### **Introduction**

Your pet has been diagnosed with hyperadrenocorticism, this condition is more commonly known as Cushing's disease.

Cushing's disease is caused by the adrenal glands producing too much cortisol. Cortisol has many effects on the body, its main effect is on the metabolism of carbohydrate, protein and fat and the immune system.

The adrenal glands produce cortisol in response to a hormone called ACTH, which is produced by the pituitary gland in the brain. Cushing's disease can be caused by either the pituitary gland in the brain producing too much ACTH or the adrenal glands producing too much cortisol. Over 80% of the dogs with Cushing's have a pituitary gland problem and the rest have an adrenal gland problem. Either one or both of the adrenal glands may be affected.

The signs associated with Cushing's that you may have noticed at home are:

- Drinking more
- Urinating more
- Eating more
- Rounder abdomen-pot bellied appearance
- Muscle wasting
- Lethargy, not wanting to go for walks
- Skin changes, losing hair
- Poor coat condition

### **Diagnosis**

Your vet will have diagnosed your pet as having Cushing's disease by performing an ACTH stimulation blood test. A second test called a dexamethasone suppression blood test may also need to be performed to help diagnose your pet. Please discuss this further with your vet if you require any information about this test.

### **Treatment.**

The treatment for Cushing's disease is life long treatment with a drug called Vetoryl. Vetoryl works by blocking the synthesis of cortisol. Vetoryl capsules are normally administered once daily. They must be given in the morning with food and the capsules must not be opened.

Once treatment has started your vet will want to see your pet regularly for check ups. It is important that you attend these appointments so that we can closely monitor your pet's



condition. At these re-checks blood samples will be taken to assess liver and kidney function and various other parameters that are important for your pet's wellbeing. We will need to keep them in for a few hours to perform an ACTH stimulation test to see whether the dose of Vetoryl needs to be altered.

It is quite normal for the Vetoryl dose to be altered a few times before we find a dose that suits them. We can only start this test 4-6 hours after they have had their Vetoryl capsule so please let us know what time the medication was given when you bring them in.

### **Summary.**

- ❑ Cushing's disease requires life long treatment and regular check ups
- ❑ The capsules must be given with food in the morning.
- ❑ The capsules must not be opened.
- ❑ Wear gloves when administering the capsules.
- ❑ Please contact your vet if your pet develops the following signs: vomiting, diarrhoea or has a reduced appetite.
- ❑ If you are pregnant or trying to become pregnant please avoid handling the capsules.