

# Feline Chronic Kidney Disease

## The Functions of the Kidney

- Filters the blood to help remove metabolic waste products as urine.
- Maintains the body's water and electrolyte balance.
- Helps regulate Blood Pressure.
- The kidneys produce the hormone erythropoietin that stimulates the bone marrow to produce red blood cells (once released from the bone marrow, a red blood cell lives about 3 months).

## What goes wrong with Kidney Disease

- Metabolic waste products and other harmful compounds don't get filtered and build up in the blood stream, leading to nausea, vomiting, decreased appetite and weight loss.
- Water is not retained properly and dehydration develops. Water soluble vitamins are also lost in excess. Monitor hydration (skin tent).
- Blood pressure rises.
- Ulcers can develop in the mouth and stomach.
- Phosphorus levels rise in the blood.
- Anemia, which is a decrease in red blood cell numbers, develops.

## Available treatments for Kidney Disease

- Specially formulated kidney diets can be very stabilizing. These diets are restricted in protein and phosphorus, as well as being rich in water soluble vitamins.
- Encourage water intake and monitor hydration (skin tent).
  - Feeding canned food is a good idea.
  - Make sure fresh water is always available. You can try a novel water dish design or water fall type water dispenser. Injecting a balanced electrolyte solution under the skin (SQ fluids) is eventually necessary to flush out metabolic waste products and other harmful compounds, as well as maintain hydration.
- Medication to decrease blood pressure.
- Hormone injections (erythropoietin) to treat anemia.
- If your cat will not eat a kidney diet, Phosphate-binding medication and water-soluble vitamin supplements will be necessary.
- Antacids.