

K.C. CAT CLINIC
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KIDNEY DISEASE AND THE OLDER CAT

A progressive loss of kidney function is the most common problem we see in our older cats. There is a lot that we can do to keep your cat feeling as good as possible, for as long as possible. We want to take management steps before kitties start feeling bad from their kidney disease. It is easier and more productive to treat if we can identify a problem before your cat gets really sick. We recommend screening for changes in kidney function as kitties come into their senior years with urine and blood tests.

Kidneys are tricky. They can lose 50% of their function (like when you give one away) and not show any signs in blood or urine. Damaged kidney function can't be readily detected until 65% of function is lost. Even then you can't see changes in the blood, you can only tell by changes in the urine. When you can see the slightest change in blood values along with the changes in the urine, 75% of function has already been lost.

Once kidney disease is well on its way you may see changes in how much your cat is drinking and how wet the litter pan gets. If you think there is an increase in either of these areas, let us know. Other things to be on the lookout for are weight loss and a scruffy hair coat.

We can't make kidney disease go away, but we can do quite a bit to manage it that is not too taxing for either you or your cat. Because the kidneys are responsible for many functions in the body, we will periodically want to check things like number of red blood cells, phosphorus and potassium levels, and blood pressure. Sick kidneys usually produce dilute urine, which can more easily allow bacteria to start causing problems. When we pick up footprints that tell us that the kidneys can't cope on their own in certain areas, we'll make recommendations that may help bring some of these things back into a more normal range.

We realize that our recommendations need to be realistic and reasonable to your lifestyle. We want to keep your cat's quality of life as good as possible for as long as possible.