

Kidney disease or failure can be sudden onset (acute) or develop over time (chronic). The signs can be similar, but this handout will address acute kidney failure.

Clinical Signs

Severity and Type of Signs Depend on the Cause

- Sudden onset
- Lethargy
- Weakness
- Not eating
- Vomiting
- Confusion
- Seizures
- Diarrhea
- Excessive urination
- Inability to urinate



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Acute Kidney Failure

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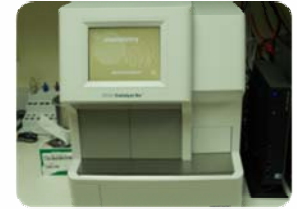
Causes of acute kidney failure can include:

- Infection (e.g. Leptospirosis)
- Toxin (e.g. antifreeze, grapes or raisins)
- Trauma to the kidney
- Shock
- Reaction to anesthesia (in patients with previous kidney disease)
- Bladder obstruction

Diagnosis

Diagnosis of acute kidney failure is based on clinical signs, history of exposure and blood test results. Pets with failing kidneys have some or all of the following:

- Severely elevated kidney values (BUN/Creatinine)
- Low urine specific gravity (dilute urine) & protein in urine
- Possibly elevated white blood cell count
- Elevated Phosphorus &/or low Potassium
- Enlarged kidneys



Treatment



Fluid Therapy

Intravenous fluid therapy is vital to flush the kidneys. This must be done in the hospital, and may be required for several days.

Medications

- Medications used depend on clinical signs and cause
- Antibiotics
- Antidotes if toxin is suspected
- Phosphate binders
- Anti-vomiting medication
- Stomach Protectants

Acute kidney failure may lead to chronic kidney disease

The key to treatment of acute kidney failure is fluid therapy and if possible, the treatment of the underlying cause

Diet

A specific low protein diet is recommended to reduce the kidneys' workload. The less stress the kidneys have, the better they will work. This may be necessary for several weeks or indefinitely, depending on the cause.

Prognosis

Survival and return to normal function depend on:

- The cause of kidney failure and
- Level of response to treatment.