

Addison's Disease

Overview

Hypoadrenocorticism, also called Addison's disease, is an endocrine disorder that results from a deficient production of adrenal gland hormones. The most common cause of Addison's disease is destruction of the adrenal gland tissue by the pet's immune system. In Addison's disease there is usually a deficiency of cortisol and a mineralocorticoid (aldosterone). Cortisol is responsible for combating stress. Aldosterone regulates the water, sodium, potassium, and chloride concentrations in the body.

Addison's disease is an uncommon disorder in dogs and is extremely rare in cats. It is thought to be inherited in Leonbergers, standard poodles, and Nova Scotia duck tolling retrievers. Certain other breeds may also be predisposed, such as the Airedale, bearded collie, German shepherd dog, German shorthair pointer, Great Dane, St. Bernard, English springer spaniel, West Highland white terrier, wheaten terrier, and Portuguese water dog.

Addison's disease most often affects young to middle-aged dogs. About 70 percent of affected dogs are female.

Diagnosis and Treatment Notes:

- Addison's disease can be difficult to diagnosis since it mimics many other diseases. It is generally diagnosed by a thorough history, physical examination, bloodwork, urinalysis and an ACTH stimulation test.
- Treatment depends on the severity of the disease, your individual pet, and your veterinarian. Pets with Addison's disease are treated with cortisol and mineralocorticoid replacement therapy. Some will need fluid and electrolyte support. Discuss treatment details when your pet is diagnosed with this condition.

What to Watch for*:

- Poor appetite



- Vomiting
- Lethargy
- Weight loss
- Depression
- Diarrhea
- Excessive thirst

**Please notify us if you notice any of the above signs or if you have any questions!*

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