

Cushing's Disease

Niles Animal Hospital and Bird Medical Center
7278 N. Milwaukee Ave. Niles, IL 60714
(847)-647-9325 FAX (847)-647-8498
www.nilesanimalhospital.com

Overview

Hyperadrenocorticism or Cushing's disease is a disorder resulting from overactive adrenal tissue, which produces excessive amounts of cortisone. Cortisone and related substances are essential hormones of the body, but when produced in excessive amounts these substances may cause systemic illness.

In most pets, the cause of the disease is a tumor of the pituitary gland. The tumor produces a hormone that stimulates the adrenal glands to grow larger and produce excess amounts of cortisone. In other pets, the cause is a tumor of the adrenal gland itself.

Cushing's disease usually occurs in middle-aged to older dogs with most affected dogs being over 9 years of age. Both males and females are affected. The most commonly affected breeds include poodles, dachshunds, miniature schnauzers, and German shepherds. Boxers and Boston terriers are prone to development of Cushing's disease caused by pituitary tumors.

Diagnosis and Treatment Notes:

- Cushing's disease is generally diagnosed by a thorough history, physical examination, bloodwork and tests of the adrenal hormones (stimulation or suppression tests). X-rays of the chest and abdomen, urinalysis, and abdominal ultrasound may be recommended. In some situations, a CT or MRI may be of benefit to differentiate a pituitary tumor from an adrenal tumor.
- Treatment depends on the severity of the disease, your individual pet, and your veterinarian. Pets with Cushing's disease due to a pituitary tumor are treated with medical therapy such as mitotane or ketoconazole. Dogs with Cushing's disease due to an adrenal tumor may be treated with surgical removal of the adrenal tumor or treated medically with mitotane or ketoconazole. Discuss treatment details when your pet is diagnosed with this condition.

What to Watch for*:

- Increased drinking
- Increased urination
- Increased appetite
- Abdominal distention (pot-bellied appearance)
- Hair loss

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