

GCVS ANNOUNCES NEWEST TREATMENT

Hemodialysis

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We are excited to present the newest addition to our growing assembly of innovative veterinary medicine treatments—Hemodialysis! The practice of dialysis is commonly used to treat humans for a multitude of illnesses, specifically, issues with kidney function. Although this treatment is relatively new to veterinary medicine, many pets receiving hemodialysis have a life-threatening disease, making it an important measure in overall animal wellness.

Often dialysis and hemodialysis are used interchangeably, but there are differences between the two. Dialysis is uniformly defined as the process of removing waste through a membrane. The process of hemodialysis differs from dialysis by removing waste directly from the blood. There are two main reasons for performing hemodialysis. The first is for pets that have ingested a toxin or drug that can be removed with hemodialysis. Of the many toxins that can be removed, antifreeze (ethylene glycol) is the most common. The other indication for hemodialysis is for pets that have an acute kidney injury—abrupt damage to the kidney from a variety of causes. In animals, hemodialysis treatment for acute kidney injury is reserved for pets that have failed to respond to more common treatments (intravenous fluids and medications). Pets diagnosed with either of these issues, if

left untreated, face severe illness or possible death.

During the process of hemodialysis, the patient's blood is pumped through a circuit to a filter for the removal of toxins, waste, and excess fluid. The patient's blood is then processed multiple times in order to meet the goals of the treatment.



Once filtered, the blood is returned to the patient. The duration of the entire process is dependent on the goals specific to each patient. Sessions can last anywhere from 4 to 22 hours, depending on the intended outcome. During this time, pets

are usually awake and able to eat and interact. Typically, for pets with acute kidney disease, multiple treatment sessions are needed. In between sessions, pets remain hospitalized to receive the best care throughout the entire process.

Recovery time for healthy pets that may have recently ingested a toxin can take

as little as 24 to 48 hours. Pets with severe kidney disease often spend at least a week in the hospital, with full recovery time taking possibly a month or longer. Although some pets are able to make a full recovery and don't require long-term treatment, some pets are left with a measurable amount of kidney disease, even after treatment. These pets may require a lifelong diet change or subcutaneous (under the skin) fluid administration.

Prevention and early diagnosis are key to a faster recovery. Knowing the signs of illness could save your companion from additional problems and ensure they receive the appropriate attention. Signs of acute kidney disease can be subtle and non-specific, they include: increased thirst, increased urination, lethargy and decreased appetite. Consult with your family veterinarian if your pet shows any of these signs. Once your pet has been evaluated by a veterinarian, they will determine what specific diagnostics and treatments should be performed.