

SO YOUR DOG WAS DIAGNOSED WITH ATYPICAL ADDISON'S DISEASE

When your dog comes home:

- 1) Please remember to breathe. Dogs live long, normal lives with Addison's as long as they receive their medication, which needs careful adjustment until you find the best dose for your dog.
- 2) Make sure your dog always has access to water. They need to be hydrated for the medication to work properly. Any urine accidents or leaking will be resolved as the medication is adjusted.
- 3) Your dog may not have an interest in food right away. Tempt them with things they like that are not fatty. Some good choices are lean meats, skinless chicken breast, scrambled eggs, & rice. Gradually reintroduce their normal foods. You might need to change their bowl if they associate it with being sick. There is no special diet for an Addison's dog, but avoid excessively fatty foods.
- 4) Your dog may be tired at first. Recovering from an Addisonian crisis is like a human recovering from surgery. Once the medication starts working, your dog will start to regain his or her strength. Let your dog be your guide. Start slowly and build up his or her activity.
- 5) Set up a file with all test results. You can also ask for a copy of the vet's notes from their file. This is valuable to be able to refer back to or to bring along if you ever need to see a different vet.

Daily:

- 1) Prednisone/Prednisolone (or other glucocorticoid) should be given every morning with food. It replaces the cortisol your dog can no longer produce. Some glucocorticoids, such as cortisone acetate and hydrocortisone, need to be given twice daily with meals.
- 2) Dogs are often started on higher doses of "Pred" at diagnosis. Typically, the dose needs to be reduced within the first week or two due to symptoms of excessive thirst, urination, hunger, panting, or aggressiveness. If you see these, talk with your vet about carefully reducing the dose.
- 3) Once you have worked out a plan with your vet to reduce the dose, watch for signs of vomiting, diarrhea, lethargy, or lack of appetite. These are signs you've reduced too much or too fast (unless there is some other identifiable cause). These issues can be corrected quickly by going back to the previous dose of Pred.
- 4) Regarding Pred reductions, the goal is to get to the lowest effective daily dose where your dog is happy, healthy, active (not hyper), has a normal appetite (not ravenous), & shows no signs of excess Pred. This is when you know you're at the right dose for your dog. There is no test that can tell you the correct dose of Pred.
- 5) There may be times of stress when your dog may need a boost of Pred. Stress can be either good stress – increased activity, or bad stress – scared, nervousness. Because it only takes about 30 minutes to take effect, it is usually not necessary to pre-boost. When boosting you only need to increase by about half the regular dose. Many of us rarely need to boost the Pred. You will learn to read what your dog needs.

First Month and forward:

- 1) Because there is the possibility of a dog with Atypical Addison's transitioning to Typical Addison's, it is important to check the electrolytes ("lytes"), which are sodium (Na) and potassium (K), monthly for the first 3 months. Afterwards they should be tested every 2-3 months during the first year or so. If an Atypical Addison's dog is going to transition, the largest percentage of those dogs will transition within the first year. If your dog ever seems "off", or you are noticing any Addisonian type symptoms the lytes should be checked. These symptoms could include any of the following: hind end weakness, low heart rate, tremors or shaking, lethargy, vomiting, diarrhea, lack of appetite, weight loss, dehydration, exercise intolerance, or collapse.

Please note: Since our dogs require glucocorticoids, NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs such as Rimadyl, Metacam, Meloxicam, & others) are not safe because they can lead to kidney damage and stomach ulcers. Instead, Prednisone is typically used as an anti-inflammatory drug and Tramadol or Gabapentin are often used for pain.

Dogs with Typical Addison's should not be given Pedialyte or Gatorade-type products because they contain potassium. If there is still a risk of your dog transitioning from Atypical to Typical Addison's, these products should also be avoided.