

## CUSHING'S DISEASE

For Johnson Veterinary Services Clients and Pets

**PREMISE:** There's an organ in dog's bodies that makes a hormone that allows them to deal with stress. And it allows the kidney to make changes as needed across the body. It's a "regulatory" chemical and it's called "CORTISOL". The organ that produces it is "the adrenal gland" located in the abdomen down next to the kidney.

### MEDICAL RELEVANCE:

In some cases, a dog starts making TOO MUCH cortisol. The side effects are:

- Thirst
- Hunger
- **Extreme vulnerability to infections**
- Thin skin
- Lethargy
- Elevated liver enzymes, and even **liver damage**

### DIAGNOSTIC:

At first, discovering elevated liver enzymes in the blood PLUS some of the symptoms above make us *suspicious*.

Then, we can give additional hormones as a **test**. We "tell the Adrenal gland what to do" with chemicals for one day. If the cortisol "does what we ask it to do" then the dog does NOT have Cushing's Disease.

But, if the "cortisol" **IGNORES THE MESSAGES** then you diagnose that the dog DOES have Cushing's Disease and we treat it.

### Test(s) we want to run:

- Dex Suppression Test [ ]
- High Dose Dex Suppression Test [ ]
- Adrenal Ultrasound [ ]
- ACTH Stim. Test [ ]

### TREATMENT

Almost all of these Cushing's cases are caused by a **Pituitary tumor**.

But don't worry: We can help correct the problem with various medicines by various names like: Trilostane, Lysodren, Mitotane, O,P-ddd hormone. (I like Trilostane with a Utrecht-method Prednisolone backup) The office manager can give you some idea of costs.

Very rarely, the Cushing's is caused by an Adrenal Tumor. For those, I've got nothing useful for you but surgery which is a specialist thing. Fortunately, it's so rare as to *almost*-never have happened in my practice or purview.

### HOW DOES THE DOG BENEFIT?

1. Easier weight management
2. Less voracious appetite
3. Less thirst
4. Thicker skin and resistance to infections
5. More energy