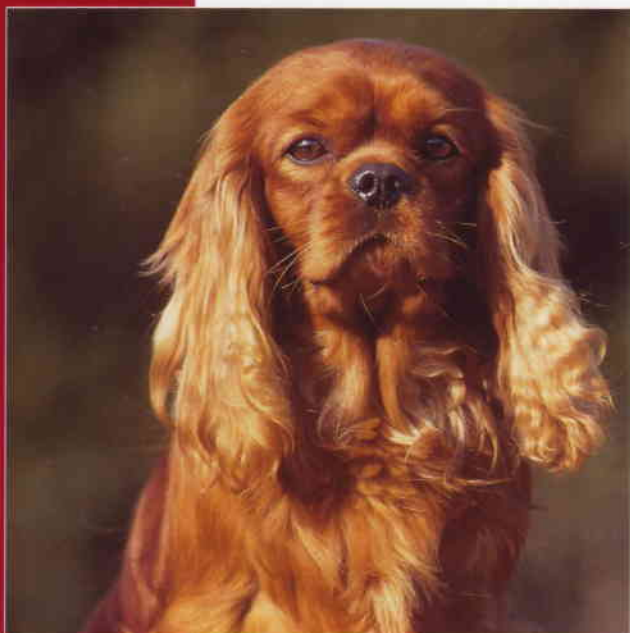




Heart Disease



This Brochure
courtesy of

Hollyoak
Veterinary Surgery

IMPINGTON

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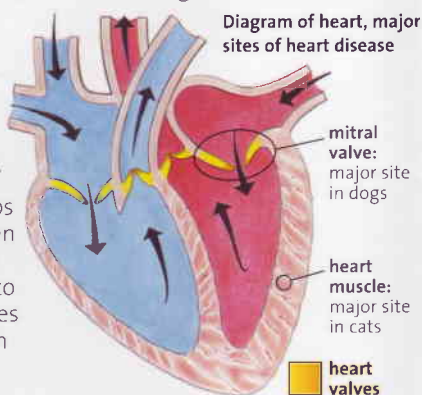
What is heart disease?

Hear disease includes all disorders which impair the structure and function of the heart. It is a common disease in dogs, affecting more than one animal in ten.

The two main types of heart disease in dogs are, **chronic valvular disease**, in which a defective, i.e. leaking, heart valve reduces the efficiency of the heart in pumping blood (this is by far the major heart disorder of dogs), and **myocardial disease**, in which changes in the heart muscle results in the heart pumping less effectively.

Myocardial disease is the most common heart disorder of cats.

Heart disease develops into heart failure when the heart is unable to pump enough blood to supply the body tissues with adequate oxygen and nutrients.



There are a number of factors that can contribute to heart disease, these include:

BREED

In dogs chronic valvular disease is more prevalent in small breeds (e.g. Miniature Poodles and Cavalier King Charles Spaniels) and myocardial disease is more common in large and giant breeds (e.g. Great Danes and Irish Wolfhounds).

GENDER

Heart disease is more common in male dogs and cats.

AGE

Heart disease in dogs occurs more frequently with increasing age; cats with heart disease are usually middle-aged or older.

BODY CONDITION

Dogs and cats that are grossly overweight are more likely to develop heart disease.

Recognising the signs of heart disease

There are a number of signs that may develop in a pet with heart disease:

- Lethargy and weakness
- Fainting and collapse
- Reduced ability to exercise
- Difficulty in breathing, e.g. rapid and wheezing
- Frequent coughing
- Abdominal swelling
- Reduced appetite
- Weight loss
- Partial paralysis of the hind legs (cats)

IMPORTANT

Initially signs of heart disease may not be obvious, only becoming pronounced as the disease progresses. If you are in any doubt, please consult your veterinary surgeon.



Diagnosis

Regular visits to your veterinary practice will help your vet monitor your pet's health. The physical examination will include checking the pulse and heartbeat. If heart disease is suspected, your vet may advise other diagnostic procedures. These can include,

Radiography

X-rays can reveal changes in the size, shape and position of the heart, and any build-up of fluid in the chest.

Electrocardiography (ECG)

This records the electrical currents generated by the heart to determine its rhythm and provide other information about its function.

Echocardiography

This technique uses ultrasound to record the position and movement of structures in the heart and demonstrate any deformities, for example, in the heart valves.

Measurement of blood pressure

Although not so easy to perform as in people, instruments have been developed which simplify blood pressure measurements in dogs and cats.



Management and control of pets with heart disease

Emergency treatment of heart disease will usually require your pet to be hospitalised for a time. In the long term, heart disease may be managed effectively using appropriate medication, lifestyle changes (e.g. regulating exercise) and special nutrition. These are often sufficient to allow pets to lead a relatively normal life.

The dietary management of pets with heart disease aims to lower the workload of the heart by reducing the amount of fluid retained in the body. Hill's offers a range of products, to be fed under veterinary supervision to dogs and cats with heart disease.

Hill's™ Prescription Diet™ Canine h/d™ is low sodium foods with regulated levels of other essential nutrients – to replace nutrients that are inevitably lost as a result of drug treatment and to ensure an adequate intake of taurine to support



heart function.



Hill's™ Prescription Diet™ Canine k/d™ and Prescription Diet™ Feline k/d™ have reduced sodium levels to help in managing the early stages of heart disease.

Owner's checklist

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- ✓ Watch for signs of illness and don't delay in seeking advice from your vet
- ✓ Feed only the food recommended by your vet
- ✓ Follow carefully any guidelines concerning your pet's exercise and weight management
- ✓ Ensure that a supply of fresh water is always available. Distilled or deionised water may be advised
- ✓ Monitor your pet's weight, behaviour and general health

FEEDING GUIDE

All Hill's products are extremely palatable foods that are eagerly accepted by most pets. However, when suffering from heart disease your pet may have a reduced appetite or be less willing to eat. If your pet does resist this change of food, the following tips may help:

- Introduce the new food gradually – mix it with your pet's usual food, adding more of it each day until you have completed the change-over
- Warm canned food to body temperature – but no hotter – before feeding
- If your pet refuses to eat for more than 48 hours, discuss the problem with your vet

Remember our food is 100% Guaranteed – we promise complete satisfaction or we buy it back.



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