



Liver Disease



This Brochure
courtesy of

Hollyoak
Veterinary Surgery

IMPINGTON

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What is liver disease?

The term 'liver disease' covers a wide range of conditions in which the liver functions less efficiently than normal.

The liver is the largest internal organ in a pet's body, with an estimated 1,500 functions to perform. It plays a central role in the digestion and conversion of nutrients, the removal of toxic substances, the synthesis of key components of the blood and the storage of vitamins and minerals.

Many liver disorders, such as those caused by viruses, bacteria, or damage by drugs and chemicals, result in inflammation – referred to as hepatitis. Severe, prolonged inflammation, if untreated, may cause healthy liver cells to be replaced by scar tissue.

The liver's function can also be impaired by diseases elsewhere in the body, and some pets are born with abnormal blood vessels that cause the liver to be 'bypassed' – depriving it of nutrients.

Factors that can influence the likelihood of a dog or cat developing liver disease include:

AGE

Inherited and developmental disorders usually produce signs at an early age, whereas liver tumours are most common in pets over 10 years old.

BREEDS

Certain breeds, such as Bedlington and Yorkshire Terriers, Cocker Spaniels and Siamese cats are more likely to be born with, or to develop, particular liver diseases.

ENVIRONMENT

Toxic chemicals (such as pesticides and herbicides) and drugs, if accidentally consumed, may result in liver damage.

BODY CONDITION

Cats that are obese, or do not eat for 4-5 days for whatever reason, appear more likely to develop liver disease.

Recognising the signs of liver disease

It may be difficult to recognise that your pet has liver disease because the most common signs are the same as for many other disorders, i.e.

- Poor appetite
- Depression
- Vomiting and diarrhoea
- Loss of weight
- Increased thirst in dogs

Specific signs in certain severe cases include:

- Jaundice (yellowing of the gums, skin and the 'whites' of the eyes)
- Abnormal behaviour (i.e. nervous signs)
- Swelling of the abdomen

IMPORTANT

Liver disease can be indicated by a wide variety of abnormal signs. If you are in any doubt about your pet's health, consult your veterinary surgeon.



Diagnosis

A thorough physical examination of your pet may alert your vet to the possibility of liver disease. However, because the physical signs of liver disease are often not specific, your veterinary surgeon may use a number of procedures to help make a precise diagnosis.

These can include:

Blood tests

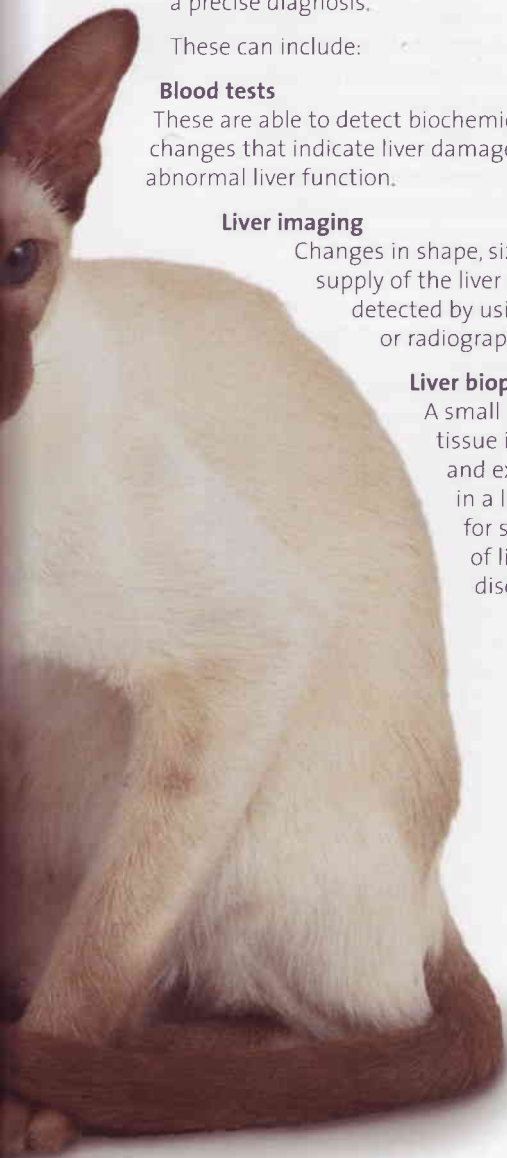
These are able to detect biochemical changes that indicate liver damage or abnormal liver function.

Liver imaging

Changes in shape, size or blood supply of the liver may be detected by using ultrasound or radiography (x rays).

Liver biopsy

A small sample of tissue is collected and examined in a laboratory for signs of liver disease.



Management and control of pets with liver disease

Depending on the severity and nature of the liver disorder, your vet will recommend appropriate measures – ranging from nutritional management to drug therapy, and in certain cases, surgery.

The liver has an amazing ability to repair and regenerate itself, provided that the cause of the disease does not persist. Correct nutrition plays an important part in supplying the nutrients needed to help build new tissue and support a pet's recovery.

Hill's offers a range of products, to be fed under veterinary supervision, to dogs and cats with liver disease.

Hill's™ Prescription Diet™ Canine I/d™ and Feline I/d™ constitute a complete range of canned and dry foods for dogs and cats, specifically formulated to alleviate the clinical signs of liver disease and promote liver repair and regeneration.

Canine I/d™ and Feline I/d™ are effective in managing pets with liver disease because they use highly digestible proteins, carbohydrates and fats in combination with other nutrients to help:

- Limit the production of metabolic toxins
- Reduce the workload of the liver
- Improve the efficiency of the liver
- Accelerate recovery



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 pet food recommended by your vet
- ✓ Divide each day's food ration into frequent, small meals, including one at bedtime
- ✓ Monitor your pet's weight, behaviour and general health
- ✓ Speak to your vet before changing your pet's medication or feeding regimen

FEEDING GUIDE

All Hill's products are extremely palatable foods that are eagerly accepted by most pets. However, when suffering from liver 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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