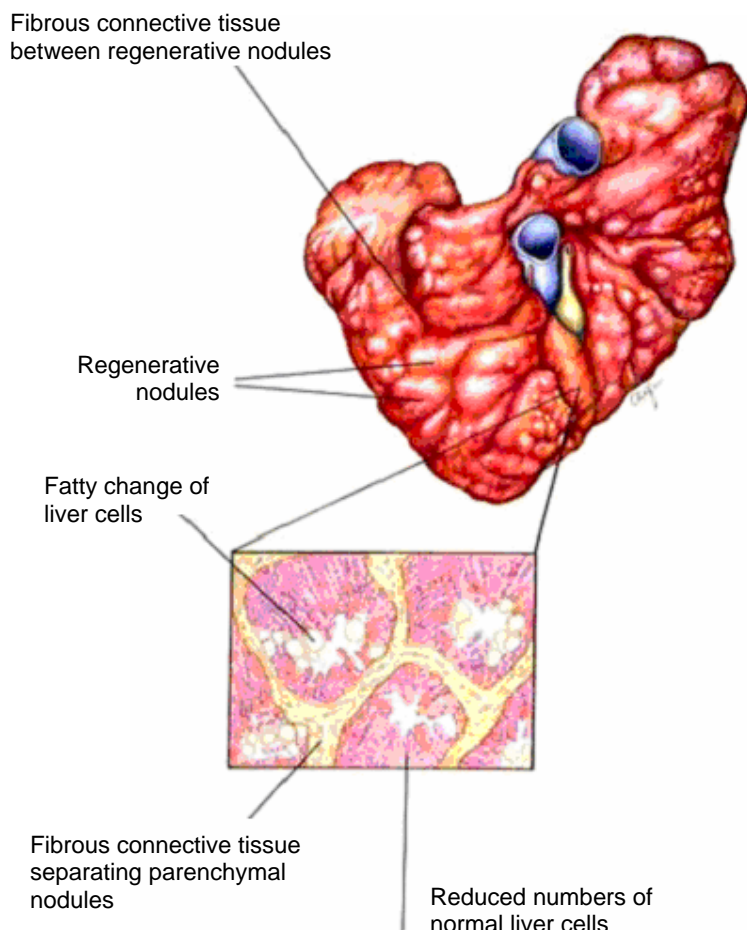


# End-Stage Liver Disease



## End-Stage Liver Disease

### Diagnostic Plan

History  
Physical examination  
Abdominal palpation  
Blood work  
Abdominal X-rays  
Abdominal ultrasound  
Blood clotting time  
Urinalysis  
Liver biopsy

### Therapeutic Plan

Fluid therapy  
Cage rest  
Corticosteroids, antibiotics,  
Hepatoprotectants,  
ursadiol, colchicine

### Nutritional Plan

Nutrition that will reduce the  
need for certain liver  
functions  
Provide adequate protein, but  
avoid excess levels  
Consider possible need for  
controlled sodium intake

## End-Stage Liver Disease

Your pet has end-stage liver disease. End-stage liver disease is characterized by a failure of the liver to perform its many functions. Treatment goals include removing the cause, supporting the animal and treating the complications of liver failure. This client education sheet will help you learn more about end-stage liver disease and will review your veterinarian's instructions for your pet's care at home, as well as follow-up with the veterinary health care team.

### What You Should Know About End-Stage Liver Disease

The liver is the largest gland in the body and serves many complex functions that are necessary to maintain life. Because the liver performs so many tasks, including ridding the body of many toxins and drugs, it is subject to damage by many disease processes. But the liver has a remarkable ability to regenerate after it has been damaged.

End-stage liver disease is the result of advanced liver damage in which the liver can no longer adequately perform its functions. In end-stage liver disease, much of the ability of your pet's liver to regenerate is gone.

### Causes

Many causes of liver disease may lead to liver failure. These causes include viral, bacterial, and fungal infections, inflammation of the liver caused by diseases in other organs, trauma, poisons, chemicals, and toxins, altered blood flow to the liver due to heart failure and congenital abnormalities.

## Diagnosis

If your veterinarian suspects end-stage liver disease, he or she may perform some or all of the following diagnostic tests: physical examination to check for fluid in the abdomen and a yellowish discoloration (jaundice) of the skin and gums; blood tests; special tests to check for the liver's ability to metabolize or take up certain substances; ultrasound; and X-rays. Liver biopsy will confirm the diagnosis.

## Treatment and Home Care

Treatment of liver disease will differ from patient to patient depending on the cause. Supportive therapy includes rest and confinement to improve blood flow to the liver, reduce its workload and decrease pain. Fluid therapy may be used to correct fluid, electrolyte, blood sugar and metabolic problems. Medications such as corticosteroids and antibiotics may help some animals.

Home care consists of giving all prescribed medications and bringing your pet in for reexamination and diagnostic tests as directed by your veterinarian.

## Nutritional Plan

Often dietary therapy is the single most important method of modifying the course of end-stage liver disease. The objective of dietary therapy for patients with impaired liver function is to provide optional nutrition while decreasing the workload of the liver. Foods that decrease the liver's workload have lower sodium, high quality and lower levels of protein, easily digested carbohydrates and high-quality fats. Special foods with these nutritional characteristics include Hill's® Prescription Diet® I/d® Canine and I/d® Feline Hepatic Health.

Depending on your pet's progress and clinical signs, your veterinarian may need to further adjust your pet's dietary management plan. If body fluid build-up develops when your pet is fed a food with moderate sodium restriction, your veterinarian may recommend a special food with severe sodium restriction. Such foods include Hill's® Prescription Diet® h/d® Canine Cardiac Health. If severe mental depression or other nervous system signs such as convulsions develop in your dog, a dietary product with severely reduced levels of protein may help control clinical signs. Such foods include Hill's® Prescription Diet® u/d® Canine Non-Struvite Urinary Tract Health.

## Transitioning Food

Unless recommended otherwise by your veterinarian, gradually introduce any new food over a seven-day period. Mix the new food with your pet's former food, gradually increasing its proportion until only the new food is fed.

If your pet is one of the few that doesn't readily accept a new food, try warming the canned food to body temperature, hand feeding for the first few days, or mixing the dry food with warm water (wait ten minutes before serving). Feed only the recommended food. Don't feed additional salt or any snacks that may contain sodium. Be patient but firm with your pet. This is important because the success or failure of treatment depends to a large degree on strict adherence to the new food.

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*Presented as an educational service by*

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## Home Care Instructions

Client's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Patient's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Medication(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Nutritional Recommendation: \_\_\_\_\_

Follow-Up Appointment: \_\_\_\_\_

(Hospital Stamp Area Above)

REGULAR VISITS WILL HELP OUR VETERINARY HEALTH CARE TEAM PROVIDE FOR YOUR PET'S BEST INTEREST.