



HEPATIC LIPIDOSIS

ABOUT THE DISEASE

During times of reduced food intake or starvation, the body naturally sends fat to the liver to be processed for nutrition and energy. In feline patients, this influx of fat is not efficient and often overwhelms the normal function of the liver. The associated disease is referred to as fatty liver disease, or **hepatic lipidosis**, and is the most common liver disease in feline patients.

There is no one single cause for **hepatic lipidosis**. However, any disease (kidney disease, pancreatic disease, inflammatory bowel disease, cancer, etc) that causes a reduction in appetite (anorexia) can cause **hepatic lipidosis**.

Once patients have developed **hepatic lipidosis**, it will often cause abdominal pain, reductions in appetite (anorexia), a yellow color to skin/eyes/gums (icterus/jaundice), weight loss, vomiting, diarrhea, loss of muscle, depression, collapse, and ultimately death.

OBTAINING A DIAGNOSIS

A feline patient's history of prolonged anorexia and standard in-house blood tests will provide the clinical diagnosis of **hepatic lipidosis**.

Abdominal ultrasound can aid in diagnosis but is often utilized to acquire a liver biopsy.

TREATMENT

Treatment is focused on adequately managing patient's underlying disease and improving appetite.

In severe cases, hospitalization may be required to facilitate injectable medication administration, intravenous (IV) fluids, and handfeeding. However, if patient remains anorexic while attempting to treat their underlying disease, they may require a feeding tube to ensure adequate nutrition while recovering.

Depending on underlying disease, some feline patients require lifelong medication administration, prescription food, or regular recheck appointments to track disease progression.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- The most effective treatment measure is to diagnose the underlying disease. This may require more tests than usual but will reduce long-term expenses and patient suffering.
- Do not be afraid of a feeding tube. They are easily placed by veterinarians and are the best way to provide nutrition in early management.