

A Pet Owner's Guide:

Liver Disease



Understanding the Liver

The liver is one of the most vital and complex organs in the body, providing many functions that contribute to the overall health of your pet. However, because of its many functions, the liver is prone to injury and disease, which may be undetectable during a physical exam.

Some liver diseases are hereditary or are present at birth and can occur at a young age, while others are more likely to occur later in life.

What Does the Liver Do?

To understand liver disease, it is helpful to first understand what the liver does. Below are just some of the many functions your pet's liver performs:

- Detoxifies the body
- Metabolizes and produces fats, carbohydrates, and proteins
- Produces important proteins and clotting factors
- Metabolizes, stores and activates vitamins
- Stores minerals, glycogen and triglycerides
- Metabolizes bile acids needed for digestion

Diagnosing Liver Disease

Liver disease is most often diagnosed using multiple diagnostic tests. Identifying the cause and type of liver disease is important to determine the best treatment and prognosis for your pet.

Your veterinarian may recommend some or all of the following tests:

	Chemistry Panel Tests specific to the liver can be evaluated, as well as proteins, kidney values, and electrolytes.
	Complete Blood Count (CBC) Provides information on red and white blood cell counts. A low red cell count, called anemia, can occur with liver disease.
	Urinalysis Provides information on the urinary system and helps to interpret the chemistry panel.
	Bile Acids Helps determine the causes of liver disease and evaluates liver function.
	Coagulation Testing Evaluates the ability of the blood to clot. The liver produces clotting factors.
	Imaging X-rays or ultrasound evaluate abdominal organs.
	Infectious Disease Testing Screens for parasitic and bacterial diseases such as heartworm, Leptospirosis, and tick-borne diseases in dogs, and retroviral diseases such as Feline Leukemia Virus (FeLV) and Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV) in cats.
	Fecal Screens for gastrointestinal parasites.
	Liver Biopsy An invasive test to evaluate the liver microscopically.



Causes

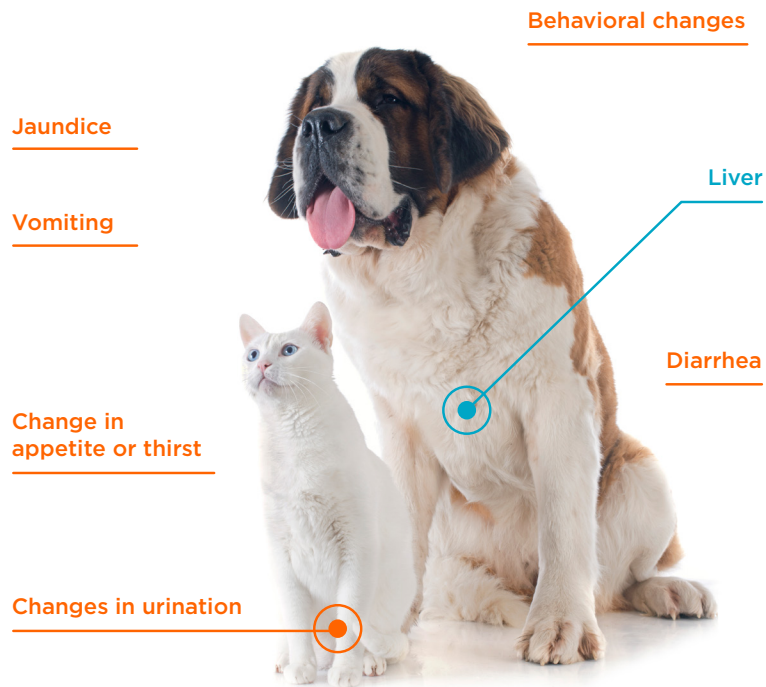
Liver disease is classified based on the underlying causes. Some examples of liver disease include:

- Hepatitis (Inflammation)
- Cirrhosis/fibrosis
- Bile duct obstruction
- Infectious (Leptospirosis)
- Circulatory or blood vessel abnormalities
- Cancer
- Toxin
- Secondary to another organ injury

Clinical Signs*

It can be easy to miss some of the clinical signs of liver disease in your pet, since they can be similar to other problems your pet could have.

Common signs include:



*Clinical signs can apply to both cats and dogs.

Treatment for Liver Disease

Once liver disease has been diagnosed, it's important to use diagnostics to monitor the progression of the disease and how the liver is responding to treatment. Treatment and monitoring of liver disease will differ for every animal based upon the specific condition or cause. Your veterinarian will discuss options specifically for your pet.

Treatment may include some or all of the following:

- Nutritional recommendations
- Medications
- Supplements
- Lifestyle changes
- Additional testing
- Regular monitoring with your veterinarian

Monitoring your pet's disease allows your veterinarian to assess how well treatment is working and modify treatments as needed.





Ask Your Veterinarian About Diagnostic Testing for Your Pet

Your veterinarian will be able to detect issues earlier and treat them sooner with simple diagnostic testing designed for your pet. Diagnostic testing is also used to establish a biometric baseline to closely monitor your pet's health.

This clinic uses Zoetis diagnostics to aid in the evaluation of your pet's health.

Schedule Regular Visits

Routine visits with your veterinarian are the perfect time for you to ask medical questions, track behavioral and weight changes, and receive tips for at-home care.

Some topics that may be covered during your visit include:

- Behavior
- Environment
- Elimination
- Nutrition
- Oral health
- Parasite control
- Vaccination
- Diagnostic testing

SCHEDULE YOUR NEXT APPOINTMENT TODAY!

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