

K.C. CAT CLINIC
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CALCITRIOL AND KIDNEY DISEASE

Kidneys make an important chemical that regulates hormones made by the parathyroid gland. This chemical is called calcitriol and it is a form of Vitamin D that helps put the brakes on production of parathyroid hormone (PTH). When kidneys don't work right, the body gets a message to make a bunch of PTH and doesn't get the signal to turn it off. Too much PTH causes lots of problems through out the body. Giving cats calcitriol when they can no longer manufacture their own can help decrease the bad stuff that happens with too much PTH and can help the cats feel better, act better and eat better. Starting this medicine when kidney disease is first diagnosed may help put off the inevitable development of the life threatening changes for a longer period of time than if it were not used.

Calcitriol can sometimes cause problems of its own. On occasion a cat taking this medicine will have problems with the level of calcium in the blood. A cat needs to be monitored by having periodic blood test performed while taking this agent. After an initial period of monitoring after treatment has begun, we try to schedule the testing so that it coincides with the routine testing recommended for any cat with kidney disease.

Calcitriol can be given in capsule form or as a liquid. It is given daily. It must be made in a special form for cats and is ordered through an out of town pharmacy that specializes in working with veterinarians. As of May 1997, 100 capsules are about \$40, and 60 days of liquid is about \$26. We need to check the blood 2 weeks, 6 weeks, and 3 months after starting this drug. Then we want rechecks of blood, urine, and blood pressure every 4 months as with any other cat with kidney disease.

If you are able to monitor your cat as recommended, we feel that the use of calcitriol will help improve and maintain your cat's quality of life. Please let us know if you are interested in using this medicine.