



FACT SHEET

Topic:	ADDISON'S DISEASE (HYPOADRENOCORTICISM)
Variety Affected:	Toy, Miniature & Standard.
Description:	Failure of the adrenal glands to secrete the corticosteroid hormones. In primary Addison's this is usually due to autoimmune damage to the adrenal cortex.
Symptoms:	Initial symptoms are vague including depression, lack of appetite, vomiting and/or diarrhea with abdominal pain and muscle weakness. In an acute crisis, symptoms include low blood pressure with weakness and shivering and impaired kidney function.
Mode of Inheritance:	Recent research on both Standard Poodles and Portuguese Water Dogs suggests that Addison's is a polygenic trait with multiple genes influencing the development of Addison's disease.
Method of Diagnosis:	Blood cortisol level determination (low); CBC (complete blood count) in which certain white blood cells occur in higher than normal numbers; abnormal (low) ratio of sodium to potassium. A definitive diagnosis is by an ACTH stimulation test.
Age at Onset:	Varies.
Treatment:	Drugs to replace the missing hormones for the remainder of the dog's life. Florinef given orally daily, or Percorten V given by injection every 21 – 30 days (or sometimes longer than 30 days) and Prednisone.
Recommendations:	Addison's is fatal if left undiagnosed and untreated. Dogs with Addison's may have a crisis during periods of stress; i.e., during boarding or grooming, etc. No dog that has been diagnosed with Addison's should be used in a breeding program. Breeders should proceed under the assumption that Addison's is a polygenic trait.

The information contained in this document is current at the time of this writing and is accurate to the best of VIP's knowledge.

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