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"Tina" - Blue Point Birman with Addisons Disease



Tina

Lethargy and a poor appetite is an extremely common presentation for cats at our practice. Usually these symptoms are caused by common ailments that we will see on a regular basis.

Once in a while however we will come across a condition which is extremely rare. Such was the case with "Tina" Potter a beautiful blue point Birman.

Often a clinical examination provides us with no further clues as to the diagnosis and we will have to resort to further investigative techniques. General health blood profiles are usually the first step and gave us our first clue with Tina.

Waste products normally disposed of by the kidneys were higher than normal but further examination of the urine suggested that the kidneys were not at fault. These findings allowed us to treat Tina with supportive intravenous fluids whilst waiting for further blood results from the laboratory.

It was when these results were returned, demonstrating abnormal levels of sodium and potassium in the blood-stream, that gave us our breakthrough. Tina appeared to be suffering from Addisons disease. A further dynamic bloodtest confirmed this to be the case.

Interestingly, this disease is also found in humans and can be notoriously difficult to diagnose. This condition is caused by destruction of the adrenal gland causing a deficiency of both glucocorticoids and mineralocorticoids.

These naturally occurring chemicals are often referred to as "steroids". While most people appear to know that too many "steroids" can be harmful what is less widely appreciated is that we need to produce steady low levels of these drugs to survive.

Fortunately, the treatment of this condition is very straightforward. Replace the steroids that Tina is not producing with a daily tablet and she will live a full and active life. "Getting diagnosed" is definitely the hardest part of this disease!

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This article is available on the Fairfield Veterinary Centre web site at www.fairfield-vets.co.uk

You won't care how much we know - until you know how much we care