Hyperadrenocorticism (also known as Cushing’s disease) is a condition in which the adrenal gland produces too much steroid hormone (cortisol). Common signs of Cushing’s disease include:

- increased drinking and urination
- ravenous appetite
- excessive panting
- distended abdomen (pot-bellied appearance)
- hair loss

Your veterinarian will discuss with you what a diagnosis of Cushing’s disease means for your dog:

- Treatment options include surgery or medical management. Your veterinarian will discuss what option may be best for your dog.
- Many veterinarians choose either trilostane or mitotane as the medication.
- Medications will not cure the disease; rather they are aimed at controlling symptoms.
- Complications of uncontrolled Cushing’s disease include elevated blood pressure, chronic urinary tract infections, skin lesions, and/or diabetes mellitus.
- Close control is required to avoid disease complications.
- Side effects that are usually mild may occur from medications. These might include vomiting, diarrhea, decreased appetite, and reduced energy level.
- If side effects are severe or persistent, they may indicate a more severe adverse event (see right*).
- Cushing’s disease can take several weeks to months to control.
- If your dog is treated with medication, regular physical examinations and lab work such as cortisol checks will be needed to monitor the dose.
- Many dogs respond well to treatment and, over time, owners will see improvement in their dog's overall well-being.

* An important complication to watch for is an Addisonian crisis, which is life-threatening and reflects a dramatic decrease in cortisol levels. If your pet experiences vomiting, diarrhea, anorexia, lethargy, generalized weakness, or muscle tremors after treatment is started, contact a member of the team immediately.