

## Dogs' Increased Urination Not Always Sign of Renal Failure

### **Blood tests can identify kidney failure in dogs.**

*By Jon Geller, DVM*

Q. I have a 10-year-old neutered chocolate Labrador Retriever. I recently took him to the vet for some blood work because my vet prescribes meloxicam (used only as needed) and alprazolam for anxiety (used prior to thunderstorms). The vet did a urinalysis and said my dog has dilute urine, which is nothing new. She told me to keep an eye on increased urination and drinking. She said it may be an indication of early renal dysfunction. Can you educate me a little more on renal dysfunction? He weighs 86 pounds, without an ounce of fat. I've always kept him slim and active.

A. Sometimes routine screening tests can create unnecessary anxiety for dog owners. As long as your Lab's kidney values are normal on the blood panel, the presence of dilute urine is not a concern.

It can be hard to accurately measure a dog's water intake on a daily basis, but if it increases greatly, you may want to try to measure it. Many dogs will drink more water out of boredom, or for some other behavioral reason (maybe they enjoy it).

Meloxicam, the anti-inflammatory medication that I assume you give for arthritis, is generally safe, but it can have negative effects on dogs with pre-existing liver or kidney problems.

If a blood panel shows renal values (BUN and creatinine) elevated above the normal range, this combined with dilute urine can signify early signs of renal failure. It indicates that the kidneys have lost their ability to concentrate urine and retain water.

If your Lab is diagnosed with renal failure or dysfunction, you will need to discontinue the meloxicam (and any other medication like it), and put him on a low-protein diet.

However, kidney failure is rare in dogs, so I would say "no worries" as long as the blood panel is normal.