

Treating Your Pet with the Plechner Syndrome

Once your dog/cat has been diagnosed with the Plechner Syndrome, the goal of the treatment is to rebalance his/her hormones. In mild cases it may be sufficient to use oral supplements for adrenal support only. I typically recommend two different supplements:

- 1). Montmorillonite Clay: It works in two ways: The negatively charged ions help to bind and eliminate heavy metals from the body. Additionally, the clay supplies the body with many essential trace elements that support the entire body, including the adrenal glands. Follow the directions on the tub for 1 month, then in most cases the dose can be reduced by 50%.
- 2). Adrenal support: This is an adrenal glandular. For cats and finicky dogs I recommend a palatable liquid form (combined with Beta Sitosterol, an immune balancer); for most other dogs I recommend a capsule form (combined with several herbs for adrenal support).

Occasionally an additional supplement for thyroid gland support, Thyrocomplex, may be needed.

In moderate cases with an IgA over 58-62, I recommend to use physiological doses of orally administered hormones. Natural Hydrocortisone is used to increase the body's Cortisol level. Hydrocortisone and Cortisol are bio-identical – just two different words for the same substance. The purpose of the treatment is to increase the Cortisol level (adrenal gland) back into the normal physiological range. Once that is achieved, the total estrogen level will drop automatically via feedback mechanisms and therefore the immune function will improve.

It is important to figure out the correct physiological dose and neither to underdose nor to overdose for an extended time period. An underdose would fail to improve immune imbalances, diseases, disease predispositions and current behavior abnormalities; an overdose would lead to overdose symptoms: drinking and urinating a lot, insatiable appetite, restlessness, trouble sleeping, feeling hot, panting and possibly even muscle wasting. These symptoms will resolve promptly, usually within 24 hours when the dose of the Hydrocortisone is reduced. Please administer either cortisol preparation (Adrenal cortex or Hydrocortisone) in the AM to mimic the normal circadian rhythm of the body's own cortisol, high during the day and low at night. When the hydrocortisone is started I do not know the exact correct dose for each individual pet. The dose can vary dramatically, depending on the size of the pet and the extent of the adrenal dysfunction. I therefore typically recommend to start Natural Hydrocortisone at a relatively low dose and then to increase the daily dose by 5 mg (small dogs and cats) or by 10 mg (medium and large dogs) every 3 days and to call with an update one week after starting and then every two weeks (or in between if questions). Eventually the previous disease symptoms and/or behavior problems should improve dramatically and the dose of Hydrocortisone should be continued at that level. An alternative option to find the optimal, physiological dose is to increase the dose until mild symptoms of overdose develop and then to reduce the dose by 5 or 10 mg (or more if needed) until these overdose symptoms subside. An IgA or EI-1 test should be repeated about 1 month later.

In addition to improving cortisol levels, adjustment of the thyroid hormone is part of the treatment protocol in most dogs and a few cats. Typically there is less variation in the dose of the thyroid hormone (Levothyroxine or Thyroid caps). I usually start on 50% of the recommended dose for 5 days and then increase to the full dose. Together with the next IgA test the thyroid levels (T4 post pill) should be checked as well. Optimal timing for blood draw is 4-6 hours after giving the AM dose of the thyroid hormone. If needed the medication could be given 1 or 2 hours earlier or later than normal to accommodate a certain appointment time. E.g., if your appointment is at 11 AM (with an expected blood pull at 11:15 or

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11:30) you should give the AM Thyroid medication in between 5:15-7:15 AM. If you usually give the medication with food, then please give it with food also on the morning of your appointment.

In more severe cases, if the IgA is below 62, your pet's treatment will start with an injectable form of Cortisol. A low IgA (= Immunoglobulin A = Antibody A) indicates intestinal inflammation and malabsorption of certain nutrients and large molecule medications. Therefore, in these cases, we will have to start the treatment with injectable adrenal hormones, typically for a period of 1-2 months. After retest shows that the IgA has improved to 58-62 or higher, your pet can be switched to oral medications and the injections can be stopped. I typically use Adrenal Cortex, a natural source of Cortisol, including also precursors of this hormone. Again, I usually start with a relatively low dose and increase the daily dose by 5 (small dogs and cats) or 10 units (medium or larger dogs) every 3 days until either the animal's health and behavior have much improved or mild symptoms of overdose develop. In that case the dose should be reduced again by 5-10 or sometimes more units until those overdose symptoms subside. The injections of Adrenal Cortex are administered in the AM subcutaneously (under the skin) with an insulin syringe with a tiny needle. This insulin syringe fits a maximum volume of 100 units or 1cc or 1 mL. (If larger amounts are needed, a 3 cc syringe will be used instead.) You will be trained how to inject your dog/cat. For economical reasons, the syringe can be used for up to 3 injections, but certain precautions need to be taken to keep the syringe clean and relatively sterile. After injecting the Adrenal Cortex, please wipe the needle with a piece of alcohol soaked cotton, immediately draw up the next day's dose, recap the needle and store the "loaded" syringe in the fridge. The vial of Adrenal Cortex does not need refrigeration and can be stored at normal room temperature. Usually the needle gets pretty dull after three injections and should not be reused. Once the optimal dose of Adrenal Cortex has been determined, the pet should be maintained on that dose for a minimum of 2 (better 3) weeks and then the IgA should be rechecked. If the IgA levels have improved to over 58-62, the Adrenal Cortex can be stopped and the treatment can be switched to oral Natural Hydrocortisone and again the dose would be adjusted as described before.

In case you cannot or do not want to inject your pet yourself, you can bring him/her to the office every 2½-3 weeks for an intramuscular injection of a long acting Cortisol preparation (Depo-Medrol) instead. Usually about 3 injections are needed before the IgA can be retested and before he/she can be switched to the oral Natural Hydrocortisone.

This therapy normally needs to be continued for many years, often for the rest of your pet's life. The treatment can be compared to a hypothyroid person on Thyroid medication. It is possible though that while being treated, the functional health of the adrenal gland will improve and the gland will start producing more Cortisol and subsequently the dose of the Natural Hydrocortisone can and ought to be reduced and in some cases can be stopped altogether. This process can be greatly supported by supplementing your pet's diet with the already described Montmorillonite Clay.

Once your pet is stable and doing well, I recommend a retest of the IgA and T4 post pill (Thyroid hormone) once a year, more often if any health problems. Unfortunately, sometimes your pet will not improve as much as hoped. Food intolerances may be the reason and an elimination diet could help; or a pet can be allergic or intolerant to the vegetable oil used as the base of the Natural Hydrocortisone and a different preparation could help, or other hormone imbalances or health problems have not been addressed.

Most pets though will improve a lot and will be full of energy and happy. Clients often comment how their pet acts "like a puppy" again or like "their usual self".