



# UC DAVIS HEMODIALYSIS UNITS HELP PETS IN KIDNEY FAILURE MAINTAIN QUALITY LIVES

■ Rob Warren, UC Davis VMTH Communications & Marketing Officer

**P**ets with chronic kidney disease (CKD) face a challenging future, but thanks to advances in renal medicine, their lives can still be long and productive. Finding veterinary hospitals that offer treatments for CKD, however, can be difficult. There are less than 20 veterinary facilities throughout the country—and only two in California—that perform hemodialysis treatments. Both California locations are part of the UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine. The school's teaching hospital on the Davis campus has offered dialysis since the early '90s through the Hemodialysis and Blood Purification Unit of the hospital's Internal Medicine Service. In 2002, the school started offering the service to Southern California clients at its satellite facility, the UC Veterinary Medical Center - San Diego in the Sorrento Valley section of San Diego County.

Both facilities are led by Dr. Larry Cowgill, DVM, PhD, DACVIM, who is a pioneer in veterinary renal medicine, having worked on the discipline for more than 40 years. Over the years, Dr. Cowgill has presented many continuing education opportunities for other veterinarians to advance their knowledge of renal medicine in order to make the therapies more available throughout the country and the world.

Working alongside Dr. Cowgill are Dr. Carrie Palm, DVM, DACVIM, in Davis and Dr. Sheri Ross, DVM, PhD, DACVIM, in San Diego. Both bring many years of extensive training in renal medicine, and work closely with clients to help them through the process of dealing with a disease their pet will have to fight the rest of its life.

Both services see patients dozens of times throughout the course of treatments. Some owners are so dedicated to making sure their pets get the best treatment, they travel several hours multiple times a week to seek dialysis or other treatments to manage their pet's CKD.



UC Davis specialists have helped Ari live many years after being diagnosed with chronic kidney disease.

One of the unit's many patients is Ari, an 11-year-old Rhodesian ridgeback. Ari has been a patient of the UC Davis veterinary hospital for most of her life. Like many patients of the unit, Ari is a "lifer" – one of those patients that everyone at the hospital knows, having been to nearly 75 appointments over the past seven years.

At age 4, Ari was treated for kidney failure due to a suspected grape ingestion. Grapes, like many seemingly harmless foods, can be deadly to dogs. Once eaten, their kidneys may never be the same, causing CKD and requiring some dogs to be on permanent dialysis.

Ari was lucky, in that initial dialysis cleaned her kidneys enough to not require permanent treatment. However, her kidneys did not return to normal, as most do not after a poisoning. Her team of veterinarians—including Dr. Palm and other members of the hospital's Internal Medicine, Community Practice and Nutrition Services—has been able to manage the stage 3 CKD (stage 4 is highest) with diet and regular checks of blood and urine to maintain her health.

With the hospital's expertise, as well as her owners' dedication, Ari has been able to live a long life with her sibling companion Guy—also a ridgeback—who helps her stay active. **P**