


Thyroid Disease



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THYROID DISEASE IN COMPANION ANIMALS

Hypothyroidism

Hypothyroidism, or low thyroid gland output, is a common disease in middle age canines and, rarely, felines. There is evidence to support a familial or genetic predisposition to hypothyroidism. Some breeds that commonly develop hypothyroidism include Retrievers, Dachshunds, Schnauzers, Poodles, Cocker Spaniels and Boxers, to name a few.

Common clinical signs include: lethargy; obesity; infertility; weakness and muscle wasting; dry, scaly skin; hair loss; pyoderma; vomiting and diarrhea. Hypothyroidism can affect the efficacy of many drugs and may lead to more serious diseases such as diabetes mellitus.

Diagnosis is made by testing blood levels of T₄ (thyroxin - the primary thyroid hormone). If the levels are determined to be low based on age, sex or weight, your pet will be started on thyroid hormone replacement therapy. This is a very safe and inexpensive drug that is often given for the pet's entire life.

Blood tests will be performed as needed to ensure that your pet is not receiving too much or too little of the thyroid replacement drug.

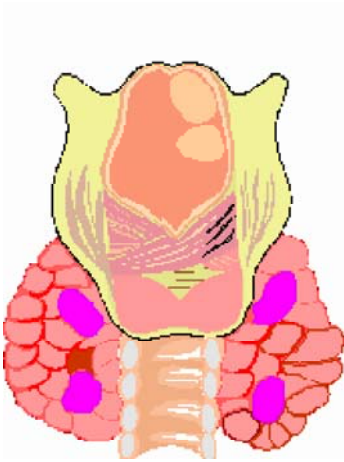
Hyperthyroidism

Hyperthyroidism (*thyrotoxicosis*), or an 'overactive' thyroid gland, is a common disease in middle aged cats and, rarely, dogs. In humans, the term *goiter* has been used to describe enlargement of the thyroid gland secondary to iodine deficiency.

Clinical signs of hyperthyroidism are insidiously progressive, causing most pet owners not to seek veterinary attention until late in the course of disease. Common signs include: weight loss despite a normal to increased appetite; hair loss and unkempt coat appearance; increased thirst; diarrhea; nervousness and/or hyperactivity.

Diagnosis is based on measuring elevated blood T₄ levels. Treatment varies from surgery to daily medications that lower thyroid hormone production to radiation therapy. We will discuss which option is best for your pet.

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Epiglottis (yellow/tan)

Thyroid Glands (pink)