

# Hyperthyroidism in Cats

## What is Hyperthyroidism?

*Hyperthyroidism occurs when the thyroid gland becomes overactive and produces more of the thyroid hormones than it should*



### What is the Thyroid Gland?

The thyroid gland is situated along your cat's windpipe and is responsible for producing thyroid hormones. These hormones are essential for your cat's health and play a key role in controlling their metabolism

### What causes Hyperthyroidism?

Hyperthyroidism is caused by the thyroid gland becoming larger and therefore producing more thyroid hormones. In the majority of cases this is due to a benign non-cancerous growth of the thyroid gland. In a small minority of cases (around 2%) it is due to a malignant cancerous growth. It is still unknown why both of these processes occur. Various causes including dietary, genetic and environmental factors have been considered.

### How is hyperthyroidism diagnosed?

Hyperthyroidism is diagnosed by taking a blood sample to check the amount of thyroid hormone in your cat's blood. We may also check other things in it's blood such as the health of their liver and kidneys as this can affect the treatment we choose

### Does hyperthyroidism affect the long-term health of my cat?

How your cat's health is affected will depend on how severely your cat is suffering from the disease and whether there are any other concurrent illnesses such as kidney disease. Many cats can be well controlled through tableting and live for years once diagnosed with the illness. Your vet will discuss the results with you and run through any concurrent illnesses at the time of diagnosis to help you understand how your cat is affected.

## How does Hyperthyroidism affect my cat?

Because the thyroid gland is producing more thyroid hormones than it should, your cat's metabolism is being told to work harder and faster than it normally should. This leads to the following changes in your cat's behaviour and health. They may exhibit some of all of these signs:

- increase in appetite
- increase in thirst
- weight loss
- vomiting and diarrhoea
- rapid heart rate
- restlessness
- increased vocalisation
- poorly kept coat
- more frequent urination

### How can I help once they have been diagnosed?

The best way of helping is to medicate your cat effectively. This is done by giving the tablet whole (not crushed) at the same time every day. If you need a demonstration on how to give this, please ask one of our vets or nurses for a demonstration.

## HOW IS HYPERTHYROIDISM TREATED?

We treat hyperthyroidism by a daily tablet which is given by mouth to your cat. The dose of the tablet will depend on how much thyroid hormone your cat has in their system. In the initial stages of treating the condition we will need to check your cat's level of

thyroid hormone by taking a blood sample to ensure we are giving them the correct dose to control the disease. Other options include surgery and radioactive iodine treatment. These can be discussed further with your vet but are not recommended as the first line of treatment