

THYROID DISEASE

IN OUR PETS

You probably know that people can have thyroid disease but did you know that your dog or cat could too? People can have either hypothyroidism (under active) or hyperthyroidism (over active). In the veterinary world, dogs can have hypothyroidism and cats can have hyperthyroidism. There are signs that your pet can exhibit when they have one of these diseases. They can be diagnosed by physical examination and blood work.

Low thyroid hormone can affect many different systems in a dog's body. Affected dogs are usually middle aged (4 to 10 years old) and certain breeds seem to be more predisposed. Some of these breeds include Golden Retrievers, Doberman Pinchers, Great Danes, Dachshunds, Miniature Schnauzers, Boxers, Poodles, and Cocker Spaniels. Signs to watch for are unexplained (meaning that you don't overfeed or feed your dog too many treats or people food) weight gain, lethargy, hair loss- especially on the sides, friction areas of the skin where the skin is darkening and becoming thicker, seborrhea, repeated skin and ear infections, intolerance to cold, and infertility. Treatment is oral thyroid medication given daily.

One of the most common complaints of clients with hyperthyroid cats is that their cats have a great appetite but are losing weight. Weight loss is one of the most common signs. Other signs include excessive appetite, excessive thirst, vomiting, diarrhea, increased respiratory rate, trouble breathing, hyperactivity, and aggression. Untreated disease can lead to congestive heart failure, kidney damage, uncontrolled diarrhea, retinal detachment due to high blood pressure, and death. There are several methods to treat the disease including daily medication, surgery, radioactive iodine treatment,

and prescription low iodine food. Your veterinarian can help you decide what the best treatment for your cat is.

It is so important to have your pet examined at least once and preferably twice yearly by your veterinarian. Pets are not generally complainers like some humans are. They are great at hiding their illnesses and pain. Our pets are our responsibility to love and take care of. Your veterinarian is ready, willing, and able to help you with that special member of your family.

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