



FELINE HYPERTHYROIDISM

- Usually seen in middle aged to elderly cats (around 10-13 years).
- Condition is caused by over production of thyroid hormone from the thyroid gland.
- There are two thyroid glands, one either side of the trachea (wind pipe).
- Thyroid hormone is involved in metabolism (chemical processes) at a cellular level.
- Both glands are affected in 70% of cats with this condition.
- In 98% of cases, the enlargement of the lobe(s) is benign and non-cancerous.
- In the remaining 2% of cases, the enlargement is due to a malignant cancerous growth of the thyroid gland.

- Clinical signs:
 - Weight-loss
 - Increased appetite (known as polyphagia)
 - Increased drinking (known as polydipsia)
 - Increased urination (known as polyuria)
 - Change in behaviour i.e. hyperactivity and increased vocalisation
 - Diarrhoea
 - Occasionally vomiting

- Diagnosis of this condition is done by your vet based on history, their clinical exam and blood tests.

- Treatment:
 - There are three different treatment options which your vet will discuss with you so that the best one is selected for your cat.
 - There are advantages and disadvantages with each of the treatment options which your vet will also discuss with you.
 1. Anti-thyroid drugs –
 - These block the production of thyroid hormone from the gland
 - Medication is required for life.
 - Regular blood tests throughout the year are required to ensure the right dose is being given.
 - These are also used to stabilise cats before using other treatment options.
 2. Surgery –
 - Removal of the gland(s) is an option for those with benign enlargement and necessary for those with the malignant growth.
 - This is a curative procedure.
 - Risk is higher when both glands need to be removed.





2. Radioactive Iodine –

- Radioactive iodine is injected into the cat, the thyroid gland uses iodine when making thyroid hormone so this chemical is taken up into the glands.
- The radioactivity then destroys the overactive thyroid cells within the glands so they are no longer able to produce thyroid hormone.
- This is a curative procedure.
- Your cat will need to be referred to a specialist centre.
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- If left untreated your cat may develop other serious conditions such as heart disease and high blood pressure.
- NB Treatment of hyperthyroidism can often uncover pre-existing kidney disease.

