



# Hyperthyroidism in cats

Owner information sheet





Your cat has two thyroid glands on either side of their neck. Hyperthyroidism is the medical term for an overactive thyroid gland. The thyroid gland produces a hormone called thyroxine, which is responsible for many things, including metabolism. When the thyroid is overactive, it produces too much thyroxine, in turn increasing metabolism. It is seen most commonly in cats of 8-10 years and affects both males and females equally. Fortunately, this is a treatable condition requiring lifelong daily medication, if left untreated this can affect other organs such as the kidneys.

Most cases of hyperthyroidism are caused by harmless changes to both glands, in rare cases a tumour can be the underlying issue.

Clinical signs of hyperthyroidism include:

- Weight loss over time
- Increased appetite
- Increased thirst
- Over activity or irritability
- Increased heart rate
- Poor or unkempt hair coat

In undiagnosed cases of hyperthyroidism or cases that are left untreated, several complications can occur, organ damage being the main concern. The main organs affected by untreated hyperthyroidism include the heart and kidneys, and blood pressure can be affected.

#### WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR MY RESCUE ANIMAL AND ME?

Your cat has been diagnosed with an overactive thyroid gland. Blood and urine samples have been tested to ensure other organs are functioning properly and the condition is considered stable. Your cat will be sent home with a one month supply of daily medication. This medication will need to continue lifelong and, as the new owner of your rescue cat this will be your financial responsibility. Your vet will aim to monitor a blood sample every 3-6 months. It would be worth discussing a written prescription for medication, which can be a cost saving measure.

Due to our diagnosis there will be insurance exclusions on any policy you take out. These exclusions may be broad due to the effect hyperthyroidism has on the whole body but we advise you seek clarification from your chosen insurance provider before choosing a policy.