



# Feline Hyperthyroidism



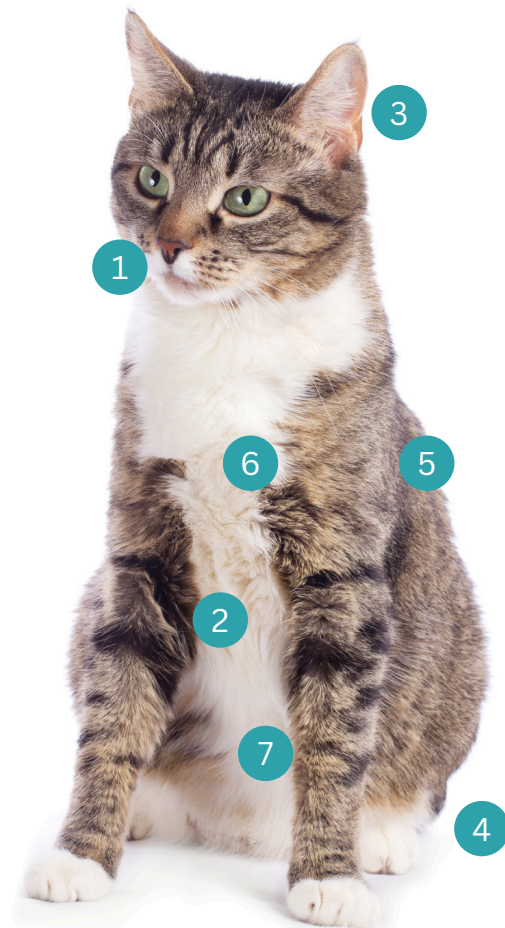
## Hyperthyroidism – what is it?

The thyroid glands are located in the neck, close to the trachea (windpipe). The glands produce thyroid hormone, which controls the rate at which cells function. In cats with hyperthyroidism, a change to the glands means that too much thyroid hormone is produced, which makes cells work very fast. **Hyperthyroidism is one of the most common diseases we see in cats as they get older, and it is treatable.**

## WHAT ARE THE SIGNS?

### Signs commonly include

1. Increased appetite and/or thirst
2. Weight loss
3. Behavioral changes – hyperactivity, restlessness, being more vocal or aggressive
4. Vomiting / diarrhoea
5. Poor coat condition
6. Fast heart rate
7. Some cats show less typical signs and become lethargic and inappetent



If hyperthyroidism is left untreated it can result in uncontrolled weight loss, damage to other organs including the kidneys, liver and heart, and can eventually be fatal.

### How is hyperthyroidism diagnosed?

A blood test is performed to measure the amount of thyroid hormone in your cat's blood. We will also assess for other illness and organ damage to enable us to advise you of the best treatment options for your cat and to help with future monitoring. This may include:

- Further blood tests
- Urine analysis
- Blood pressure measurement
- A heart scan is also recommended in some cases as heart disease is common in hyperthyroid cats

We may dispense medication for you to give your cat before coming in for these tests, to help minimise stress.

## WHAT ARE THE TREATMENT OPTIONS?

### What are the treatment options?



Medication - available in liquid or tablet form, this needs to be given twice daily for life.



Surgery – surgery to remove the gland/s is relatively straightforward and may be a good option if medication is not possible, or causes unwanted side effects.\*



Radioactive iodine therapy – radioactive iodine is injected to destroy the thyroid tissue. This is a very effective, painless and safe treatment, which is available at certain referral centres.\*

**Please speak to our vets for further information on each of these options.**

\*We generally recommend stabilizing with medication before surgery or radioactive iodine is undertaken.



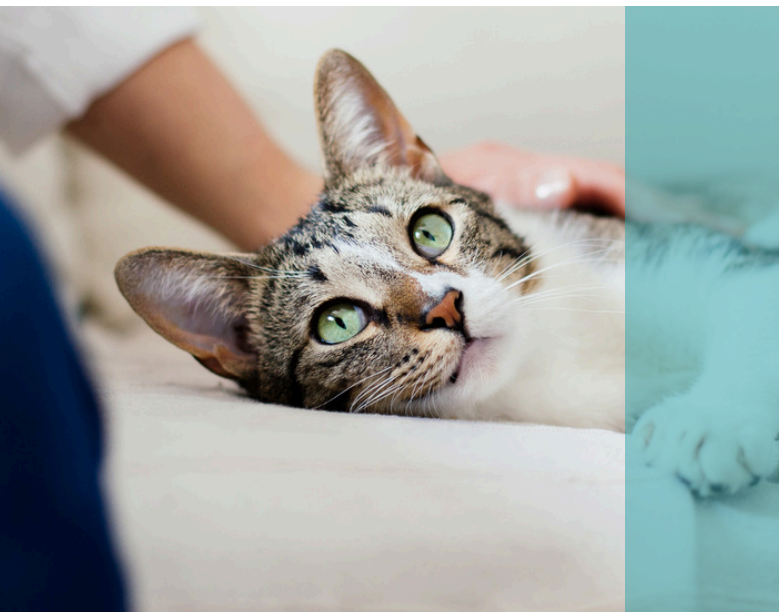
### **I've decided to treat my cat with medication - what now?**

Once medication starts we will check your cat after 2-4 weeks to assess if the dose needs adjusting and check for any effects the medication may be having on the rest of the body. This involves a physical exam, a blood test and a blood pressure check. Once your cat is stable we will check them every 3 months, with a blood test and blood pressure check every 6 months.

### **Are there any side effects of treatment?**

Hyperthyroid cats can also have undiagnosed kidney disease, which becomes visible once treatment begins. This is why we monitor your cat's kidney figures and blood pressure carefully during treatment, so we can make any adjustments necessary.

As with all medications, side-effects can be seen including vomiting, inappetence, and (less commonly) skin problems and facial itching.



### **What is the prognosis for a cat diagnosed with feline hyperthyroidism?**

If effectively managed, cats with hyperthyroidism can live for many years with a good quality of life. As with all medical conditions, the prognosis is far better if we catch it early.