



Feline  
**Hyperthyroidism**  
Awareness



IS YOUR CAT  
**9 YEARS OLD**  
OR OVER?



**Norbrook®**

# WHAT IS FELINE HYPERTHYROIDISM?

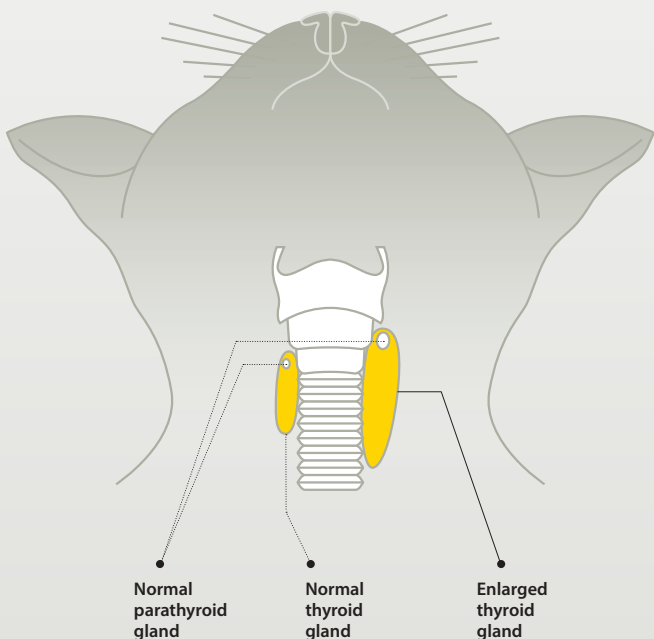
**Worldwide, feline hyperthyroidism is believed to be the most common hormonal disease in cats, and in the UK, is thought to affect 12% of the cat population over the age of 9<sup>1</sup>.**

It affects the thyroid gland, which is situated either side of the windpipe in the neck of the cat. The thyroid gland produces the hormone thyroxine (T4), which controls the body's metabolism, i.e. the speed at which the body uses energy.

In a cat suffering from hyperthyroidism, the thyroid gland becomes overactive and produces too much thyroxine. This overproduction results in a 'faster' metabolism, and a stimulation of the central nervous system, which can cause restlessness, increased activity, or even aggression in some cats.

The change in metabolism can also affect many other organs, causing them to work harder than normal, and, if left untreated, this can lead to heart disease or kidney failure and your cat becoming seriously unwell.

The good news is that hyperthyroidism can usually be diagnosed with a simple blood test, and can be treated in a variety of ways which means your cat can carry on living a full and active life.



# SIGNS OF FELINE HYPERTHYROIDISM:

- Weight loss, despite having a very good appetite
- An increase in appetite and occasionally an increase in drinking
- Poor coat condition - greasy, clumping, or generally looking a bit scruffy
- A change in behaviour or personality, e.g. becoming anxious / nervous / irritable / aggressive or restless and unable to settle. Hyperthyroid cats may sometimes become more lethargic or less interactive
- Loss of muscle over the back and hips
- Avoidance of warm places, including not wanting to sit on people
- Toileting more frequently
- Upset tummy or digestive problems
- Breathing faster or even panting

## What to do if you see any of these signs:

If your cat is showing any signs of hyperthyroidism, or you are at all concerned about your cat's behaviour or health, please contact your vet.

There may be a number of reasons for these signs, so in order to make an accurate diagnosis, your vet will:

- *ask you some questions about your cat's general health and behaviour*
- *carry out a full clinical examination*
- *check for enlargement of the thyroid gland (also known as a 'goitre')*

Your vet may also take blood from your cat in order to check its overall health, kidney function and levels of thyroxine.

If the blood results show high levels of thyroxine, and hyperthyroidism is diagnosed by your vet, then they will discuss treatment with you.



# TREATING HYPERTHYROIDISM

Treatment usually begins with a medication that helps lower the production of thyroxine to bring it down to normal levels. This medication can be in the form of an easy-to-give liquid, or as a tablet. You can decide with your vet which one would be the best fit for you and your cat.

Whilst on medication, your cat will need regular blood tests so that your vet can monitor how it is responding to treatment, and whether or not any adjustments need to be made in order to optimise the dosage for your cat.

Once your cat is stabilised on its treatment, you and your vet can discuss how you would like to manage the condition in the long-term. It might be that you choose to continue with medication, if it is easy to give and is working well for you and your cat. Other options might include surgery to remove problem thyroid tissue, or radioiodine therapy, where radioactive iodine is used to deactivate the thyroid gland. Your vet will be able to discuss each option with you to help you decide which one is most suitable for you and your cat.

**Generally the outcome for cats diagnosed with hyperthyroidism is **very good** – have a look at some of the real-life stories overleaf...**



## Lilly

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*'We took Lilly to see the vet as she had become anxious, restless and found it difficult to settle. Lilly had also lost some weight. A blood test confirmed that she did have hyperthyroidism and Lilly was prescribed medication which helped her to become much more settled, relaxed and meant that she was no longer an anxious cat.'*



**Lilly pre treatment  
(13 years old)**

*'This photo (Lilly before treatment) reminds me of Lilly before her medication and all the hours we spent trying to calm her and help her to settle. She could only sit still for short periods before being very vocal and upset in nature. All our usual cat calming techniques failed to reassure her and so we visited our vet. It was just so sad to see her so worried all the time.'*



**Lilly on treatment  
(15 years old at time of photo)**

*'After treatment began Lilly became much more calm and settled in any one of the several chairs she claimed as her bed. Lilly enjoyed her life much more fully with us and wanted to be part of every moment of our days. Her serenity seemed almost regal!'*

## Millicent Moppet (Milly)

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*'We took Milly to the vet as she had lost weight and was generally out of sorts. The vet diagnosed hyperthyroidism and started her on medication.'*



**Milly pre treatment  
(15 years old)**

*'In the photo showing Milly before she was diagnosed and treated she used to get cold as one of the side effects, so liked to snuggle in blankets when she was unwell and she didn't go out much. Her fur also looks rough and her head is hung down.'*



**Milly on treatment  
(16 years old)**

*'Milly is once again looking fit and healthy, she has a good body weight and happy to be outside and she looks gorgeous.'*

## Foggy

*'Foggy had become very thin, his coat was in poor condition and he looked unwell. The vet diagnosed him with hyperthyroidism with a thyroxine (T4) blood test. Foggy was looking much better after 6 months of treatment.'*



**Foggy pre treatment**  
(13 years old)



**Foggy on treatment**  
(13.9 years old)

For further information about  
feline hyperthyroidism, please visit  
**[www.norbrook.com/hyperthyroidism-in-cats](http://www.norbrook.com/hyperthyroidism-in-cats)**

If you think your cat might be showing signs of hyperthyroidism or if you have any other concerns about your cat's health or wellbeing, please contact your veterinary practice.

Produced by Norbrook® Laboratories Limited, manufacturers  
of Thyronorm® Oral Liquid Solution for Cats.

### References

<sup>1</sup> Caney, S. Caring for a cat with hyperthyroidism.  
2016. Vet Professionals