

# HYPERTHYROIDISM

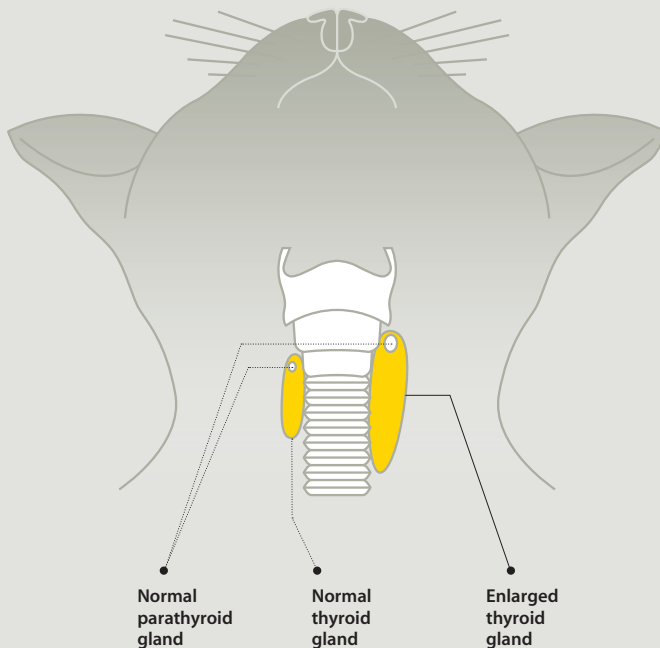
**Worldwide, hyperthyroidism is believed to be the most common hormonal disease in cats, affecting 10% of the cat population over the age of 9<sup>1</sup>.**

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

Hyperthyroidism is when 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 leading to restlessness, increased activity or even aggression.

The change in metabolism affects many organs in the body causing them to be overworked as compared to normal. If left untreated, this could lead to heart or kidney failure and your pet becoming seriously unwell.

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



**If you are at all concerned about your cat, speak to one of the veterinary team in your surgery.**

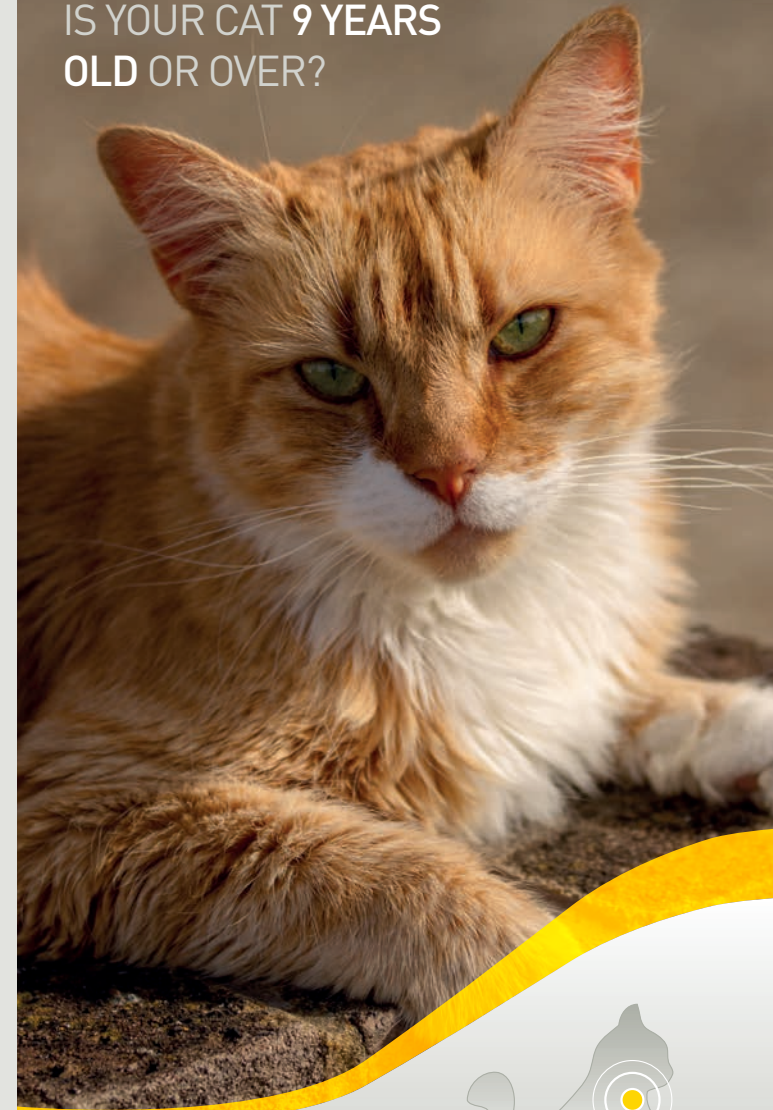


Produced by Norbrook® Laboratories Limited, manufacturers of Thyronorm® Oral Liquid Solution for Cats.

#### References

<sup>1</sup> Caney, S. Caring for a cat with hyperthyroidism. 2013. Vet Professionals

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



Could your pet be showing signs of

**HYPERTHYROIDISM?**

## WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR:

- Loss of body weight / muscle / tone over back and hips, 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 even restless and unable to settle. Hyperthyroid cats may sometimes become more lethargic or less interactive.
- Avoidance of warm places including not wanting to sit on people.
- Toileting more frequently.
- Upset tummy or digestive problems.
- Breathing faster or even panting.

It is always a good idea to have your elderly pet health checked once or twice a year by your vet.

## Have you spotted any of these signs - if so what next?

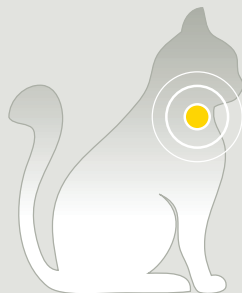
If at any time you spot any of the signs of hyperthyroidism, or are at all concerned about your cat's behaviour or health, make an appointment to see your vet as soon as possible.

Some of these signs may be caused by diseases other than hyperthyroidism. When you bring your cat to the vet, they will:

- ask you some questions about its health and behaviour
- do a full clinical examination
- check for a 'goitre' which is the enlarged thyroid gland
- listen to the heart and check the heart rate and listen for any murmurs.

The vet may also take a blood test, which will be used to check your cat's overall health, levels of thyroxine (a thyroid hormone) in your cat's blood and its kidney function.

If the blood results come back as having high thyroxine levels, and hyperthyroidism is diagnosed, your vet may suggest a number of options to treat the condition. There are a range of medical or surgical treatments available. A prescription diet may also be suggested by your vet.



## Treatment

Treatment usually starts with a medication, this is available in a tablet, or in a liquid format which has recently won an award for being easy-to-give to cats. You can discuss with your vet which you and your pet will find least stressful to administer.

The active ingredients in the medication reduce the production of thyroid hormones and help to reduce them to normal levels.

Regular blood tests will be necessary to check how your cat is responding to its medication, and to make sure that it is not being given too high or too low a dose.

Your cat may have another illness that the hyperthyroidism is hiding (such as kidney disease). Once treatment has started these illnesses may come to light.

Once your cat is stabilised on its hyperthyroid treatment and any additional problems are addressed, you can either maintain your pet on its medication or other long term treatment options may be considered. These 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 is most suitable for you and your pet.

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

## 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. Because he was already 13, the vet thought tablets were his best option. Foggy was looking much better after 6 months of treatment.'*



Foggy pre treatment  
(13 years old)



Foggy on treatment  
(13.9 years old)

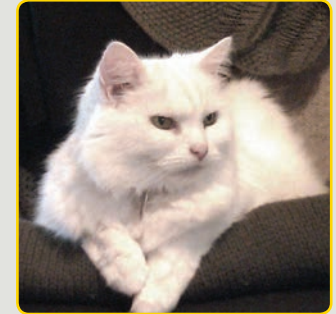
## Lilly

*'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.'*

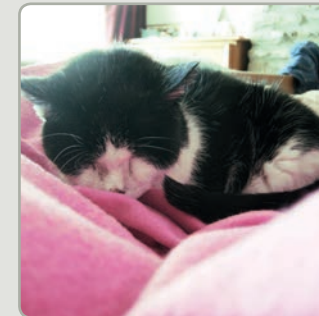


Lilly on treatment  
(15 years old at time of photo)

*'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)

*'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.'*