



## What is hypothyroidism?

Hypothyroidism in dogs happens when the thyroid glands, located in the neck, are unable to produce enough thyroid hormone. Thyroid hormone helps regulate and control many normal bodily processes. Not having enough thyroid hormone in the system leads to a decreased (slower) metabolism. It's typically suspected when dogs show a decrease in energy and activity levels.



## OTHER SYMPTOMS INCLUDE:

- Weight gain, without an increase in appetite
- Lethargy
- Sensitivity to cold
- Hair loss
- Excessive shedding
- Recurring skin and/or ear infections

Hypothyroidism can affect dogs of any age—male or female—but tends to affect large-breed dogs more often.

## What if my dog has been diagnosed with hypothyroidism?

First of all, don't worry. Hypothyroidism is the most common canine hormonal disorder, and it's easily managed with a simple, inexpensive and effective medication. Treatment will help to increase your dog's thyroid levels to normal and improve metabolism and energy. With treatment, other signs of the disease will also begin to improve.

## How will my dog be treated for hypothyroidism?

To treat hypothyroidism, your veterinarian may suggest synthetic thyroid medication. Though daily and lifelong, this medication is inexpensive and well tolerated by most dogs, with minimal (if any) side effects seen. Treatment should return your dog's metabolic rate back to normal levels. With treatment, you will likely see your dog lose weight, regain energy and develop a healthier coat.

Regular checkups with your veterinarian will help ensure your dog is receiving the proper dose of medication and responding to treatment. A simple blood test to check your dog's thyroid hormone level is usually all that's required, although your veterinarian may want to run additional tests.

For more on hypothyroidism, visit [pethealthnetwork.com/dog-health](https://pethealthnetwork.com/dog-health).





## What is hyperthyroidism?

Your cat's thyroid hormone helps regulate and control many normal bodily processes. Hyperthyroidism is a condition caused by too much thyroid hormone in the system, generally due to a benign tumor that's developed on one or both thyroid glands, leading to an increased (faster) metabolism. In turn, energy needs, and often activity levels, are increased.

### COMMON SYMPTOMS OF HYPERTHYROIDISM INCLUDE:

- Weight loss, despite an increase in appetite
- Increased thirst and urination
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Poor coat/excess grooming

Hyperthyroidism normally affects cats 7 years and older, but because it's becoming increasingly recognized in younger cats, your veterinarian may want to run tests on your cat if he or she is showing any of the clinical signs mentioned above.

## What if my cat has been diagnosed with hyperthyroidism?

First of all, don't worry. Hyperthyroidism is the most commonly diagnosed hormonal disorder in cats, and there are several successful treatment options available. Overall, treatment will help normalize your cat's thyroid levels and reduce signs of disease.



## How will my cat be treated for hyperthyroidism?

Several treatments are available to help cats who have hyperthyroidism stay healthy, happy and comfortable. Your veterinarian may suggest:

**Oral or topical medication**—This kind of medication is effective and relatively inexpensive, depending on the length of treatment. It's also the most popular treatment option among cat guardians. The medication is usually given twice daily and is available as a pill or can be compounded into a topical gel or liquid.

**Therapeutic diet**—A prescription veterinary diet is another treatment option that is convenient and potentially effective. The diet must be fed exclusively. The degree of control of hyperthyroidism may vary from cat to cat. Expense varies depending on duration of therapy.

**Radioactive iodine therapy**—Like oral or topical medication, this treatment is considered safe and effective and is also considered the treatment of choice by many experts. The difference: It offers most cats a permanent cure and therefore additional treatment or other medication for hyperthyroidism is rarely needed. While the up-front cost is relatively expensive, the total long-term cost can be less than several years of medical or dietary management. Hospitalization in a special facility is required for a few to several days. However, not all cats are considered good candidates for this therapy, especially older cats and those with kidney and other diseases.

**Surgery**—When other therapies are unavailable, not tolerated or not recommended, surgical removal of the abnormal thyroid tissue may be an option and is generally an effective treatment. It is recommended that cats be treated with an antithyroid drug to lower their thyroid hormone levels prior to surgery to minimize the chances of anesthetic complications. Disadvantages include the need for anesthesia and hospitalization and the potential for surgical complications. The rate of recurrence of hyperthyroidism after surgery and the chances of surgical complications vary with the surgical technique used and the expertise of the surgeon.

For more on hyperthyroidism, visit [pethealthnetwork.com/cat-health](http://pethealthnetwork.com/cat-health).



**Pet Health Network**<sup>®</sup>

[pethealthnetwork.com](http://pethealthnetwork.com)

