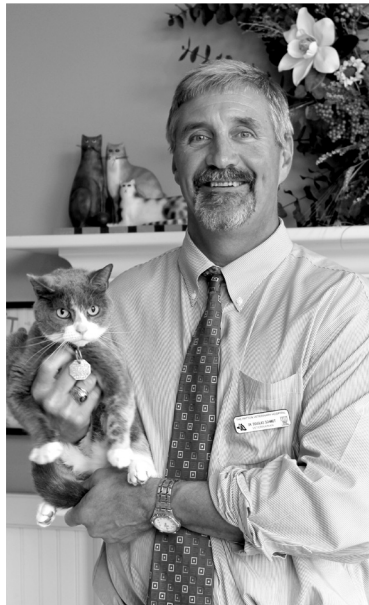


ASK OUR VET, DR. SCHMIDT



What is Feline Hyperthyroidism?

Feline hyperthyroidism is a commonly diagnosed disease in cats. This disease most commonly affects cats over the age of eight. It is characterized by an enlargement in the thyroid glands which causes increased levels of thyroid hormone or T4 to be circulating in the blood.

Clinical signs of this disease include: increased thirst and urination, vomiting, diarrhea, weight loss, increased appetite, and increased irritability. When presented to your veterinarian, your cat will likely have lost weight and may have a heart murmur or high heart rate. Fortunately, the heart changes experienced with hyperthyroidism are reversible with treatment.

Diagnosis of hyperthyroidism is relatively easy. Other than a history of the above listed changes and physical exam findings, diagnosis is made by a simple blood test. The blood test will let your veterinarian know if there are elevated levels of T4 in the blood. Also more complete blood work should be performed to examine the health of the kidneys, liver and other body systems. Elevated levels of T4 hormone can mask early kidney failure in some cats.

There are several treatment options available. The first treatment is a permanent solution called radioactive iodine therapy. This treatment destroys the hyperactive thyroid tissue, making the pet have normal thyroid levels. This is a great solution in pets that are unable to take

oral medications. Unfortunately, this option requires a special facility and hospitalization of the pet for a few days. The second treatment is daily medication called methimazole. This medication is typically given twice daily and can come in a pill, liquid, or transdermal form. Routine blood work and physical examination are required. Other options include a new diet from Hills called y/d and surgical removal of the thyroid gland.

The prognosis in most patients is good if caught early and if the pet does not have any other underlying health conditions.



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