

Hyperthyroidism in Cats

You will now have been informed by the veterinary surgeon that your cat has been diagnosed with Hyperthyroidism. Hyperthyroidism is the most common hormonal disease in cats and is seen in older animals, usually 12 years and upward. It is usually caused by an overgrowth of one or both of the Thyroid glands in the neck. In most cases hyperthyroidism can be treated very effectively.

The physical signs of hyperthyroidism are: -

- Weight loss despite a good or increased appetite
- Poor hair condition
- Change in behaviour - more irritable, aggressive, easily stressed
- Vomiting or diarrhoea in some cases

In addition to the physical signs, clinical findings are: -

- Very rapid heart rate - which can lead to heart failure
- High blood pressure - which can exacerbate heart disease, if left untreated can cause kidney failure and ruptured retinal blood vessels causing permanent blindness.

The treatment protocol varies, depending upon the severity of the disease and whether there are any concurrent diseases.

Medical Management

Your cat will be started on Felimazole tablets (ranging from 1 to 3 tablets per day), which will either be a life long treatment or to stabilize your cat prior to surgery.

Surgical Management

Once your cat has been stabilized it may be possible, in some cases, for the enlarged Thyroid gland to be removed under general anaesthetic. Cats usually respond very well to removal of the affected gland but there is a high probability that the remaining gland will become enlarged in the future and the hyperthyroidism will recur.

Radioactive Iodine Treatment

This is a very safe and effective treatment for hyperthyroidism. The success rate is high, around 95% of cats are permanently cured by a single injection. Unfortunately availability of this treatment is limited because it involves handling radioactive material, so can only be done in specially licensed centres. It is also necessary to isolate the cat at the licensed facility until radiation emission has fallen to a safe level, usually around 3-4 weeks after the injection.

Monitoring

A blood sample (to measure T4) will be taken 4 weeks after the initial therapy has started to establish the correct dosage is being given and to re evaluate any other problems identified at the initial diagnosis. Cats on the medical management protocol have to be monitored to ensure good control. For uncomplicated and stable hyperthyroid disease this will involve 6 monthly check ups to monitor the T4 level and check blood pressure. For cats with complicated disease i.e. have concurrent heart, renal disease or elevated blood pressure, more frequent check ups will be required to ensure good control.

If you would like to make an appointment or require further information please contact us at Brayton 01757 705562 or Sherburn-in-Elmet 01977 684952.