



Hyperthyroidism

Hyperthyroidism is a common hormonal disease caused by a tumor of the thyroid gland. This disease is usually seen in cats older than eight years, however it has been seen in cats as young as three. The tumor is usually a benign tumor called an adenoma. This tumor produces abnormally increased amounts of thyroid hormone that is used by the body to regulate metabolism.

The thyroid gland produces thyroid hormones and functions to influence nutrient and oxygen utilization within the body, affecting metabolism. This gland is located in the neck near the trachea. Deficiencies in thyroid hormone or interference with its function can have profound effects on the body.

SYMPTOMS:

Symptoms of an overactive thyroid include 1) increase in appetite which is accompanied by weight loss, 2) nervousness, 3) rapid heart rate, 4) soft stools, and 5) scruffy hair coat. Less common symptoms may include an increase in water consumption and urination, vomiting, diarrhea, and lack of grooming. If the thyroid enlargement is great enough, the cat may have problems breathing. Hyperthyroidism can overwork the heart and cause the cat to go into congestive heart failure. This condition can be fatal if not treated.

Diagnosis and Treatment:

The diagnosis of hyperthyroidism can be made by a simple blood test performed by your veterinarian. Hyperthyroidism is a very treatable disease. There are three effective options for treatment they include:

1. medicine
2. surgery
3. radioactive isotopes

Treatment depends on each individual case. If your cat has hyperthyroidism please discuss the treatment which is best suited for your cat with your veterinarian.

Reference: "Pet Pointers" Miller, Susan M. *The Daily Hampshire Gazette*