

## What kind of treatment will be needed?

The most commonly used treatment for hyperthyroidism is anti-thyroid drugs belonging to a group known as thioamides. They are available in liquid form and reduce both the production and release of thyroid hormones from the thyroid gland. This treatment does not provide a cure but does allow for either short-term or long-term control of hyperthyroidism. Successfully treated cats do remarkably well on this treatment, usually having complete reversal of all the signs of hyperthyroidism. They will need further evaluation to check kidney function and to ensure the long-term goals of thyroid hormone concentrations are being achieved.

For Gold Standard treatment and cure, Radioiodine treatment is available. This is a more expensive option to

the hormone treatment but worth considering if cost isn't an issue. There is a very small chance that a cat might become *hypothyroid* which means thyroid levels fall below the normal ranges. However, in a lot of these cases, thyroid levels often return to normal themselves.

To help owners screen and monitor their cat's health, book in for a complimentary senior cat consultation with our head nurse.



## Consulting Times

### Hillock Lane Surgery

Monday to Friday  
8.30am to 7pm

Saturday  
8.30am to 1pm



### Blackpool Surgery

Monday to Friday  
8.30am to 6pm

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Hillock Lane



Blackpool



# Hyperthyroidism

## Rowan Veterinary Centre

*"where pets come first"*

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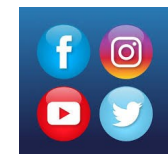
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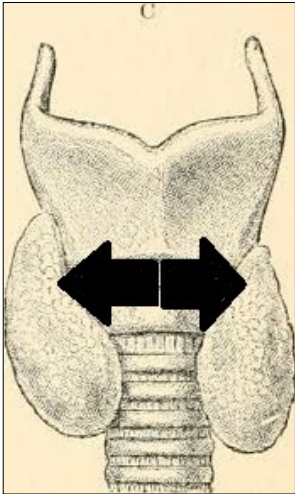
**[www.rowanvets.co.uk](http://www.rowanvets.co.uk)**

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## What is hyperthyroidism?

Like humans, cats have a thyroid gland located in their neck. It secretes thyroid hormones as part of their metabolic process. They are essential for proper growth of body cells, helps regulate the metabolism of protein, fat and carbohydrates by cells and is also involved in the regulation of heat production and oxygen consumption.



In hyperthyroidism, the gland over-produces the thyroid hormones, T4 (thyroxine) and T3 (triiodothyronine). An increase of T4 and T3 in the blood causes an increase in the cat's metabolic rate. This means that a cat with hyperthyroidism has to eat a lot of food to provide its energy as the metabolism of each cell increases the amount needed to provide the energy they need to function.

## What causes hyperthyroidism?

In the vast majority of cases hyperthyroidism in cats is caused by a benign (non-cancerous) change. Cats have two thyroid glands and, in most cases, are both involved in the disease. They become enlarged with the cause of the change currently unknown. However, it is similar to one of the two main causes of hyperthyroidism in humans called "toxic nodular goitre".

In less than 1-2% of cases, malignant (cancerous) tumour (thyroid adenocarcinoma) can be the underlying cause of the disease.

## What are the symptoms of hyperthyroidism?

Hyperthyroidism is usually seen in middle-aged and older cats and is rarely seen in cats less than 7 years

of age. Both male and female cats are affected equally.

There are a wide variety of signs that can develop but are quite often subtle at first. Overtime these symptoms become more severe as the underlying disease gets worse. As the disease affects older cats, other diseases can complicate and even mask some of the symptoms of hyperthyroidism, making it more difficult to notice.

Classic signs of hyperthyroidism are:

- Weight loss.
- A good or increased appetite.
- Increased thirst.
- Increased activity, restlessness or irritability.
- Increased heart rate.
- Poor and unkempt coat.

Some cats might develop mild to moderate diarrhoea and/or vomiting. Some will be noticeably intolerant of heat and seek out cooler places to sit. In some cases there might be a generalised weakness, lethargy and loss of appetite.

## Does hyperthyroidism need treatment?

In short, yes! Untreated and uncontrolled hyperthyroidism has important consequences to the heart. Not only does it increase the heart rate, it also causes changes in the muscular wall of the heart that will eventually cause heart failure.

Hypertension (high blood pressure) is another potential complication of hyperthyroidism and although less common, high blood pressure can cause damage to several organs including the eyes, kidneys, heart and brain. If both hypertension and hyperthyroidism is diagnosed, drugs will be needed to control the blood pressure.

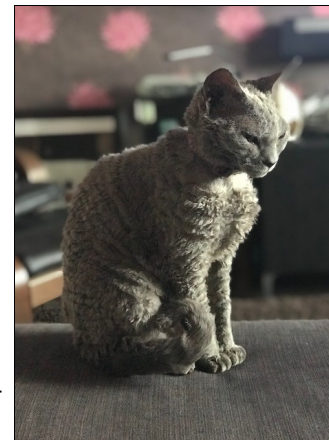
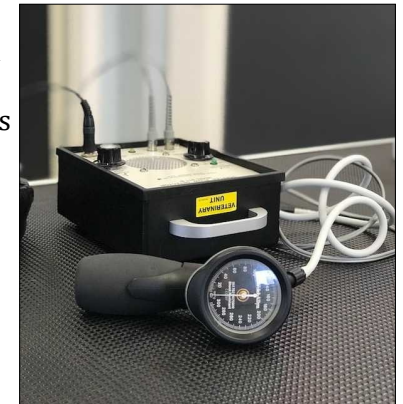
Kidney disease (chronic kidney disease—CKD) does not generally occur as a direct

effect of hyperthyroidism, but the two diseases often occur together because they are both common in older cats. If both are diagnosed, care is needed as managing hyperthyroidism can sometimes have an adverse effect on kidney function.

## How is hyperthyroidism diagnosed?

Even though the thyroid glands usually enlarge with hyperthyroidism, they are not usually visible. They can be detected by touch but in some cats there is no obvious enlargement.

To confirm a diagnosis, a blood test is needed to measure the levels of thyroid hormones in the blood. This is done by measuring the T4 (thyroxine) concentration within the blood but in some instances an additional test may be needed.



Other tests may show abnormal results such as an increase in liver enzymes, and both blood and urine tests are usually advised to help rule out concurrent problems such as kidney disease.

Blood pressure is also checked where possible and if heart disease is suspected, an ECG and/or chest x-ray or ultrasound may be recommended.