

Hypothyroidism

General Information

Hypothyroidism is a disease caused by insufficient levels or abnormal functioning of thyroid hormone. In some pets, the pituitary gland is involved, but most cases are the result of inadequate production of hormones by the thyroid.

The condition rarely appears in pets under 2 years of age; middle-aged or older pets are usually affected. Signs include some or all of the following: reduced stamina, increased sleeping, reduced tolerance to cold, dry coat and skin, premature graying of the muzzle, hair loss, slow hair growth, recurrent skin infection and the appearance of dark pigment in the skin. The face may appear puffy, and females may have irregular cycles and/or reduced fertility. Males have shrinkage of the testes and show less interest in females.

Important Points in Treatment

1. Blood tests are necessary to diagnose the condition and monitor treatment.
2. Hypothyroidism is controlled rather than cured, and lifetime therapy is necessary.
3. *Diet:* Follow the instructions checked.
____ Feed the normal diet.
____ A special diet is required. Feed as follows: _____

4. *Activity:* You may notice an increase in your pet's activity after treatment has begun. This is normal.
5. *Medication:* Medication must be given as directed. Call the doctor if you cannot give the medication.

Notify the Doctor if Any of the Following Occur

- Your pet becomes extremely active or excitable.
- Your pet's condition does not improve.
- Your pet's general health seems to worsen.