

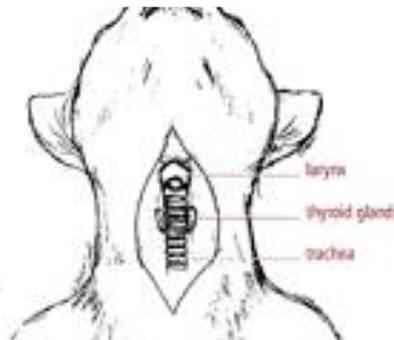
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Troublesome Thyroid?

Hyperthyroidism is the most common endocrine (hormonal) disease of cats. It is due to an increase in production of thyroid hormones from the thyroid glands. These hormones

regulate many body processes and when in excess they can cause serious illness. One role of the thyroid hormone is to help control the body's metabolic rate, so when too much is produced, cats will lose weight despite increased appetite. In 97-99% of cases hyperthyroidism is due to a benign tumour of one or both of the thyroid glands. Very rarely the tumour can be malignant.



Clinical Signs

- Weight loss
- Increased appetite
- Vomiting/ Diarrhoea
- Hyperactivity
- Vocalisation
- An unkempt coat
- High heart rate
- Increased drinking and urinating
- Less commonly we see an 'apathetic' form of the disease where they may have a reduced appetite, lethargy/ fatigue
- In 80% of cats you can feel an enlarged thyroid in the neck (goitre), but not all!

Diagnosis

- History and clinical examination
- Specific blood test—measures the amount of thyroid hormone to see whether it is in excess
- General blood test—to check kidney function as this is often affected as well

Treatment

There are five choices available to you when deciding how to treat your cat. Each different option has its advantages and disadvantages.



Tablets - either once or twice daily ongoing. This is an effective treatment option. The tablets contain a drug that suppresses the production of thyroid hormones bringing the level back into a normal range. The tablets do not cure the tumour, they only block the effect of the thyroid hormone. The tumour will continue to grow. Regular blood tests are required to monitor complications and thyroid levels.

A special diet - Thyroid diets contain restricted amount of iodine. Iodine is a key ingredient in producing thyroid hormones and therefore a reduced intake will suppress production. Again, this option does not cure the tumour, only decreases excess hormone so the tumour will continue to grow. They must only eat this diet so it can be challenging in multi-cat households or for cats that wonder a lot.



Troublesome Thyroid cont...

A transdermal gel - This treatment works almost exactly like the tablets described above but is absorbed through the ear skin.

Surgery to remove one or both thyroid glands

(Thyroidectomy) - This option can be curative as we remove the gland that is over-producing and therefore there is no need to feed a special diet or tablet daily. This option is more invasive and generally more suited to younger cats.

Radioactive iodine therapy - This final option can be described as the 'gold standard' but comes with a cost. This treatment can only be carried out at a specialist referral practice and therefore involves a longer journey to the vets and a period of staying away from home in hospital (2-7 weeks).

Concurrent problems/diseases

1 in 5 cats that suffer from hyperthyroidism also suffer from kidney disease and this can greatly reduce their quality of life and life expectancy. For this reason, it is a good idea to test their urine and blood periodically for kidney insufficiency. Please discuss the frequency of testing with your vet. It is also common for hyperthyroid cats to have a high blood pressure. A high blood pressure is greatly debilitating and can make them feel very unwell. It also puts them at risk of end organ failure such as blindness and can put extra strain on their kidneys. Heart disease can also become apparent in cats with hyperthyroidism.



Monitoring

During the start and stabilisation of treatment, your cat may need blood tests every 3 weeks or so. Once stable, routine blood tests will be recommended approximately every 3 months. This is to measure the thyroid levels and ensure we are giving the correct dose. If the levels are too high or low, we can tailor the dosage to correct this.

If your cat has had surgery, we may need to measure the blood thyroid levels post surgery and periodically to check all is well.

Your vet will also recommend a full health screen periodically to assess general health and side effects.

Prognosis

Most hyperthyroid cats can be treated very successfully and live a normal life with a normal life expectancy. If he/she has concurrent disease such as kidney disease the prognosis becomes more guarded as they can be very unstable and difficult to manage.

Spring dangers... Fleas & Ticks

Spring is the time of year when nature starts to wake up. This doesn't just apply to the spring bulbs and leaves on the trees... it also applies to critters such as fleas and ticks. These creatures are present all through the year, especially due to central heating keeping our houses cosy, so we recommend preventative treatments even in winter. However, they seem to be MUCH more prevalent in spring and summer.

Fleas

Fleas bite your pet and cause intense itchiness as well as potential allergies. But remember they can also bite you! They will sit in your carpet and under your skirting boards/between floor boards in their juvenile form and wake up when your pet is near them. REMEMBER, fleas also transmit tapeworms so its really important to prevent them and treat them if they are present. If your pet has a flea problem, make sure they are also treated for worms.



Routine prevention is the best plan, and you can pop in to discuss this with your vet or reception. If these little critters have set up camp in your house, you will need to treat your house and car with a spray containing insect growth regulator (not just one that kills the adults). But read the instruction carefully before use, especially as you have fish, as you will need to prevent contact with some species.

Ticks

Ticks are present in the environment; especially in woodland and moorland. They will climb aboard your dog or cat when they are in the undergrowth and then bite through the skin to a blood vessel. They will feed until they are full of blood and then drop off. Again, prevention is better than cure! They can be tricky to remove as they cork-screw onto the skin with their bite. Use a specific tick remover to get rid of them (pop into the practice to buy one for a few quid) and make an appointment for a nurse to show you how if you are not sure. Its really important to remove or prevent ticks as they can spread diseases such as Lymes disease.



There are LOADS of different flea and tick prevention options available so pop in to the practice or give us a call (01 626 835 002) to ask for advice about what is best for your pet. Don't forget we now offer a pet health plan so you can save ~~£££~~ each year on your preventative medicines such as flea and tick treatments and boosters.

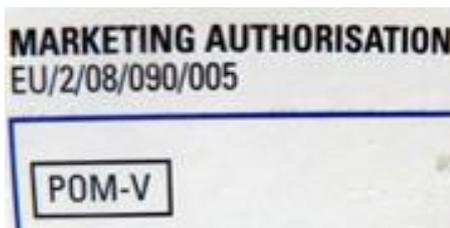
Why do we have to perform medications reviews for ongoing medication?

If your pet is on a long-term medication, you may be wondering why you need to come in every 3-6 months for a medication review, especially if nothing has changed. We don't make you come in just to be difficult!



We are actually committed to doing this in order to comply with the rules and regulations imposed by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons. But as well as complying with the legal stuff, it also allows you to bring your pet in for an MOT for a reduced consult fee!

To abide by the rules and regulations, we ask to examine your pet approximately every 6 months in order to continue to dispense or prescribe drugs to them. Please note that in some instances if your pet is receiving a drug for a disease that is more changeable and risky to the patient (i.e. heart disease) we may ask you to bring your pet in more frequently, so we can closely monitor them. This is for the safety of your pet. Most medications are classified as Prescription Only Medicines (POM-V). This means that they can only be provided under a veterinary prescription for a specific condition in a specific animal. Legally, the animal must be defined as "under our care" for us to prescribe a POM-V.



The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, which is the professional body governing vets, interprets this phrase in the following way:

- The veterinary surgeon must have been given the responsibility for the health of the animal by the owner/ owner's agent.
- That responsibility must be real and not nominal.
- The animal must have been seen immediately before the prescription is provided, or, recently enough or often enough for the veterinary surgeon to have personal knowledge of the current condition of the animal to make a diagnosis and prescribe.

- What amounts to 'recent enough' is a matter for the professional judgement of the veterinary surgeon in the individual case. In human medicine, repeat prescription checks are normally carried out every 6 months, or more often if the severity of the condition dictates this. Consequently, we have adopted the same protocol.
- A veterinary surgeon cannot usually have an animal under his or her care if there has been no physical examination.
- A veterinary surgeon should not treat an animal or prescribe POM-V medicines via the internet alone.
- The Veterinary Surgeon must only supply the minimum amount of medication required for the treatment of the condition.
- Each supply of prescription drugs must be authorised by a Veterinary Surgeon.

Always remember, if you are ever unsure of why the vet is suggesting something, just say! We are more than happy to provide further explanation.

These regulations mean that we cannot provide or prescribe Veterinary Prescription Medicines if we have not personally examined your animal within a recent time frame, and we cannot just prescribe prescription only medications or antibiotics over the phone. Please bear with us when we ask to see your animal. We are required by law to do so and are not being difficult! We have created a 'Prescription Check Up protocol' for the prescription of drugs in the hope that our clients will feel that what they get at these check-ups are both useful and good value for money.



If your pet is on long term repeat medication and requires a check up, then please speak to the practice who will arrange a video consultation for you.

Pet Superstar

Tegan first presented to our out of hours service following a period of lethargy, inappetance and vomiting.

Initially, conscious xrays were performed to avoid the risk of a sedation. These highlighted a concerning mass within her abdomen. Tegan's owners were keen to investigate further so the decision was made to sedate her to repeat the xrays.

Sedation helps to relax the patient allowing better quality images to be obtained. Subsequently, areas of calcification could be found within the mass. Calcification is an abnormal finding in the abdomen so an ultrasound scan was performed directly over the mass to add to our clinical picture. This established the mass was suspected to be a lymph node. The decision was made to perform a fine needle aspirate of the mass.

This involves the precise placement of a needle into the mass using the guidance of the ultrasound. A syringe is used to aspirate fluid/cells from the area in the hope of gaining understanding of it's makeup – Tegan's aspirate revealed pus – it was an abscess!

An abdominal abscess can rupture leading to peritonitis (infection) performed explorative surgery to visualise and hopefully remove the mass. On visualisation we found a cyst protruding from her intestinal wall! Alice, removed the cyst along with the portion of intestine it was attached to. This procedure has a risk of post operative complications as the intestine can leak leading to infection.

However, Tegan made a full and speedy recovery and is back to her normal self!



Introducing our Silver Award Cat Friendly Clinic!

The 'Cat-friendly Practice' accreditation scheme is a voluntary scheme developed by the **International Society of Feline Medicine (ISFM)** and **International Cat Care (ICC)**.



Molecare Pet Vets achieved Silver cat-friendly practice accreditation in 2019.

This scheme provides reassurance for cat owners that their companion is receiving quality care in the most welfare-friendly way, informed by current best practice. There are three different levels that practices can achieve – Bronze, Silver and Gold.

Examples of the criteria that a practice must meet to be awarded this status include:

- Minimising stress for cats visiting the practice by providing separate areas in the waiting room, minimising contact with other species and educating clients on how best to transport their cats to the practice.
- Exercising the ISFM cat-friendly handling protocols.
- Providing appropriate cat-sized equipment and products to better meet the medical needs of the cats.
- Education of staff and clients on the health and welfare needs of cats.
- Providing a separate cat ward within the practice.

If you would like to know more about how we have introduced cat-friendly changes here at Molecare, feel free to speak to a member of the team or our 'Cat Advocates' Danielle (vet) and Rachel (nurse).

For more information on the cat-friendly scheme, the official website can be accessed via the following web address: <https://catfriendlyclinic.org/>

Practice Updates

We have had a number of clients get in touch over the past few weeks regarding our veterinary services, appointments and routine treatments. When lockdown was enforced, all Small Animal Practices were instructed to provide emergency and critical care work only. This meant the practice doors were closed to all but those in urgent need of our help. We have been carrying out telephone and video consultations so as we can continue to support our patients and provide advice and reassurance where needed. In addition we are still seeing a number of patients in practice each week and continuing to perform procedures and emergency surgeries. Should you have any concerns about your pet, or need to speak with a vet then please phone the practice on 01626 835002 and a member of the team will be there to advise accordingly on how we can best help during this challenging time.

