



Hypothyroidism advice sheet

Introduction

Your dog has been diagnosed with hypothyroidism. In this condition, not enough thyroid hormone is being produced. This can happen due to a fault with the thyroid glands or when the thyroid glands aren't being stimulated to produce thyroid hormone. This condition is most commonly seen in middle aged, purebred dogs.

Signs you may have noticed include:

- Skin and coat changes such as skin infections, hair loss, greasy skin
- Weight gain
- Lethargy-becoming more tired or weak

Diagnosis

A variety of blood tests can be carried out to test if your dog has hypothyroidism. We can test for thyroid hormone levels and also the level of the hormones that stimulate the thyroid gland. We can also test for an antibody that can attack the thyroid gland. Your vet will decide which tests are most appropriate for your dog.

Treatment

Treatment consists of lifelong medication. The medication is a synthetic thyroid hormone. This replaces the thyroid hormone your dog isn't producing normally. Medication comes in the form of tablets and these are usually given twice daily. Your vet will calculate an appropriate starting dose for them. They will then need regular check ups and blood tests to measure how well the medication is working. The blood tests need to be carried out 4-6 hours after they have had the medication. Your vet may also take a blood test just before they are due a tablet. The dose may need to be altered until a suitable thyroid level is found on the blood tests. Your vet will let you know when the next check is due.

Side effects occur if too much thyroid hormone is supplemented. Signs you may notice include:

- Drinking more
- Urinating more
- Eating more, with weight loss
- Hyperactivity, becoming anxious

If you notice any of these signs please contact your vet.

Summary

- Treatment is for life
- Tablets should be given twice daily
- Blood tests for monitoring are carried out 4-6 hours after your dog has had a tablet
- If you notice any side effects please contact your vet.