

## Preventing Feline Hyperthyroidism

The cause of hyperthyroidism in cats is not fully understood. There is a body of knowledge that suggests that a number of factors have a role to play, and over a long period of time they may act together to result in hyperthyroidism.

Factors which have been associated with hyperthyroidism include:

- the amount of iodine in cat food
- the use of soy protein in cat food
- the container that cat food is packaged in
- fire retardants in the home
- herbicides
- pesticides (including cat flea control, both on cats and in the environment)
- cat litter
- trace elements in food

It is important to appreciate that these associations do not prove a direct link or cause, simply that an association between these factors and feline hyperthyroidism have been observed. To use this awareness in the hope of reducing the risk of hyperthyroidism developing means, where possible;

### Diet

- Avoid feeding soy protein (present in many cat foods)
- Minimise the feeding of fish
- Avoid feeding food with giblet flavours
- If feeding moist food, use pouches
- If you prefer to use canned food rather than pouches, avoid using larger cat food cans such as 156g. Instead, plan to use smaller ones such as 85g
- If you can, avoid extremes of iodine concentration in food, and avoid wide fluctuations in iodine concentrations between different diets. Some diets have high levels, others low. If possible aim to use a diet that contains the recommended amount, and avoid varying diets when very different iodine levels can be encountered. The recommended concentration is 0.5 – 2ppm
- Ensure that the diet has a recommended balance of vitamins and minerals
- Consider home cooking for your cat to avoid potential contaminants – but see a veterinary nutritionist to make sure your recipe will work
- Avoid using plastic containers for feeding or storage or heating. Avoid using clingfilm over food. Instead use ceramic or glass containers

### Drinking Water

- Consider using a quality filter on tap water to exclude contaminants.
- Avoid bottled or demineralised water.

### **Cat Litter**

- If using cat litter, choose natural biodegradable cat litters.
- Avoid cat litter that contains chemicals such as deodorisers.

### **Packaging**

- Be aware that fire retardants can become accessible to cats, for example when foam packing or mattresses becomes aged and the covering is damaged. Try to prevent access when you can
- Consider, if you can, avoiding products that make use of bromine-based fire retardants

### **Environment**

- Consider wiping your cat's coat daily, with a damp cloth
- Consider bathing your cat monthly
- Minimise house dust by vacuum-cleaning frequently, and use a cleaner with a HEPA filter
- Consider using a HEPA air filter in your home
- Use topical flea products on your cat sparingly (for example flea spot-on's)
- Use any chemicals in the home (where your cat has access) sparingly, for example environmental flea control

### **PLEASE REMEMBER**

Even if you are able to follow all these recommendations there is no certainty that your cat will not still develop hyperthyroidism. Unfortunately many of the chemicals these measures aim to control are widely available to cats. Also, there may be other factors at play which we do not yet know of or understand fully.

However, following these recommendations is not expected to harm your cat; they are a guide to offer you some awareness where you may be able to positively influence your cat's health. Please discuss your cat's individual clinical requirements with your own veterinary surgeon before acting on these recommendations.

This advice is based on information published by Dr Mark Peterson.

Further information on hyperthyroidism is available from your own veterinary surgeon, or from our website:

[www.hyperthyroidcatcentre.co.uk](http://www.hyperthyroidcatcentre.co.uk)