



**FRANKTOWN
ANIMAL CLINIC**
Compassionate care for pets and their people.

THYROID DISEASE IN DOGS & CATS

Thyroid disease is a common condition in both dogs and cats, though it affects them differently. The thyroid gland plays an essential role in regulating metabolism, and when it functions improperly, it can lead to a variety of health issues. Recognizing the symptoms early and seeking veterinary care can help manage the condition and improve your pet's quality of life.



What is Thyroid Disease?

The thyroid gland, located in the neck, is responsible for producing hormones that regulate metabolism. When the gland malfunctions, it can cause either hypothyroidism (underactive thyroid) or hyperthyroidism (overactive thyroid).

Thyroid Disease in Dogs vs. Cats

Dogs most commonly develop hypothyroidism. The thyroid produces too little hormones, which slows down metabolism and affects various body functions.

Cats typically suffer from hyperthyroidism. The thyroid produces too much hormone, leading to an overactive metabolism.



Symptoms to Watch For

Dogs (Hypothyroidism)

- *Weight gain despite normal diet*
- *Lethargy or decreased activity*
- *Hair loss or thinning coat*
- *Dry or flaky skin*
- *Cold intolerance*
- *Slow heart rate*

Cats (Hyperthyroidism)

- *Weight loss despite increased appetite*
- *Hyperactivity or restlessness*
- *Increased thirst and urination*
- *Vomiting or diarrhea*
- *Unkempt or matted coat*
- *Fast heart rate*



Initial Evaluation If You Suspect Thyroid Disease

If you suspect your pet has thyroid disease, we will begin by gathering important information about your pet's overall health. For example, we usually ask about your pet's diet, their typical food intake, and exercise levels. We will likely recommend bloodwork that includes a thyroid check. Depending on initial bloodwork, we may also recommend a full thyroid panel.



Diagnostic Tests

To confirm thyroid disease, we may perform:

- Total T4 (Thyroxine) Test – Measures thyroid hormone levels.
- Free T4 by Equilibrium Dialysis – More specific for confirming thyroid disease.
- TSH (Thyroid-Stimulating Hormone) Test – Helps diagnose hypothyroidism in dogs.
- Thyroid Panel – A combination of tests for a complete evaluation.
- Additional Tests – Bloodwork, urinalysis, and blood pressure monitoring may be recommended.



Treatment Options

Dogs with hypothyroidism are treated with daily thyroid hormone replacement medication (levothyroxine).

Cats with hyperthyroidism have several available treatment options:

- Medication (Methimazole) – Manages hormone levels but requires lifelong treatment.
- Radioactive Iodine Therapy – A potential cure that destroys overactive thyroid tissue.
- Prescription Diet (Low-Iodine Food) – Restricts iodine intake to lower hormone production.



Ongoing Monitoring and Future Testing

Once diagnosed, routine follow-up tests help ensure treatment is working effectively.

For Dogs, thyroid hormone levels should be monitored periodically with blood tests, typically every 6–12 months. Thyroid level rechecks need to be done 4 to 6 hours post-pill.

For Cats, regular T4 testing, kidney function monitoring, and blood pressure checks are recommended to help us adjust treatment for your pet as needed.

If you suspect your pet has thyroid disease, early diagnosis and treatment can significantly improve their quality of life. Contact us to schedule an evaluation.



**FRANKTOWN
ANIMAL CLINIC**
Compassionate care for pets and their people.

7658 Burning Tree Drive, Franktown, CO 80116 • 303-688-4690 • FranktownAnimalClinic.com