



Hypothyroidism

Hypothyroidism is a fairly common condition found primarily in dogs. It is caused by a deficiency in circulating thyroid hormone. Certain breeds seem to have a predisposition to developing hypothyroidism. They include Boxers, Golden Retrievers, Rottweilers, Dobermans, Irish Setters, Great Danes and Dachshunds. Hypothyroidism can produce several symptoms in dogs. Some of the more common symptoms are weight gain, lethargy, and hair loss. Other symptoms include increased thirst and urine volume, anemia, slow heart rate, skin infections, poor wound healing and sometimes neurological problems.

Testing for hypothyroidism involves doing a simple blood test. If the thyroid screening tests come back abnormal, we will send a second sample to a special endocrine lab at Michigan State University to confirm or negate the diagnosis of hypothyroidism. This is done because certain thyroid values can be low for reasons other than hypothyroidism and we want to be sure of the diagnosis before starting your pet on any medication.

Once the diagnosis of hypothyroidism is made, your pet will be started on a medication called Soloxine®, which is a synthetic thyroid hormone. In the majority of cases, your pet will need to remain on this medication for the rest of their life. Blood tests will be checked a few weeks after starting the medication and then once a year, to make sure your pet is on a good therapeutic dose, not too high or too low of a dose. As with any medication, it is very important to keep your pet on these medications and not stop or change the dose without consulting your veterinarian first.