

## Symptoms of hypothyroid disease

The signs of hypothyroid disease are related to the underproduction of thyroid hormone, which leads to a decrease in overall body metabolism. Dogs with hypothyroidism often display one or more of the following symptoms:

- Lethargy
- Weight gain
- Increased pigmentation of the skin
- Skin infections
- Dry skin
- Dry, dull coat
- Hair loss - usually on both sides of the body
- Poor hair growth following clipping
- Various neuropathies, such as incoordination

## Testing recommendations

Testing recommendations made by your veterinarian are based on your pet's breed, age, clinical signs, and history.

- Chemistry Panel, Complete Blood Count
- Chemistry Panel, Complete Blood Count, Thyroid Testing, Urinalysis
- Chemistry Panel, Complete Blood Count, Thyroid Testing, Urinalysis, Blood Pressure, Electrocardiogram

### Physiological Age in Human Years

Current Age (Year)	Dog <sup>1</sup>			
	Human Years			
	0-20 lbs	21-50 lbs	51-90 lbs	Over 90 lbs
1	15	15	15	15
2	24	24	24	24
3	28	28	30	32
4	32	33	35	37
5	36	37	40	42
6	40	42	45	49
7	44	47	50	56
8	48	51	55	64
9	52	56	61	71
10	56	60	66	78
11	60	65	72	86
12	64	69	77	93
13	68	74	82	101
14	72	78	88	108
15	76	83	93	115
16	80	87	99	123
17	84	92	104	
18	88	96	109	
19	92	101	115	
20	96	105	120	

## My Next Appointment

Pet: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Doctor: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for Appointment: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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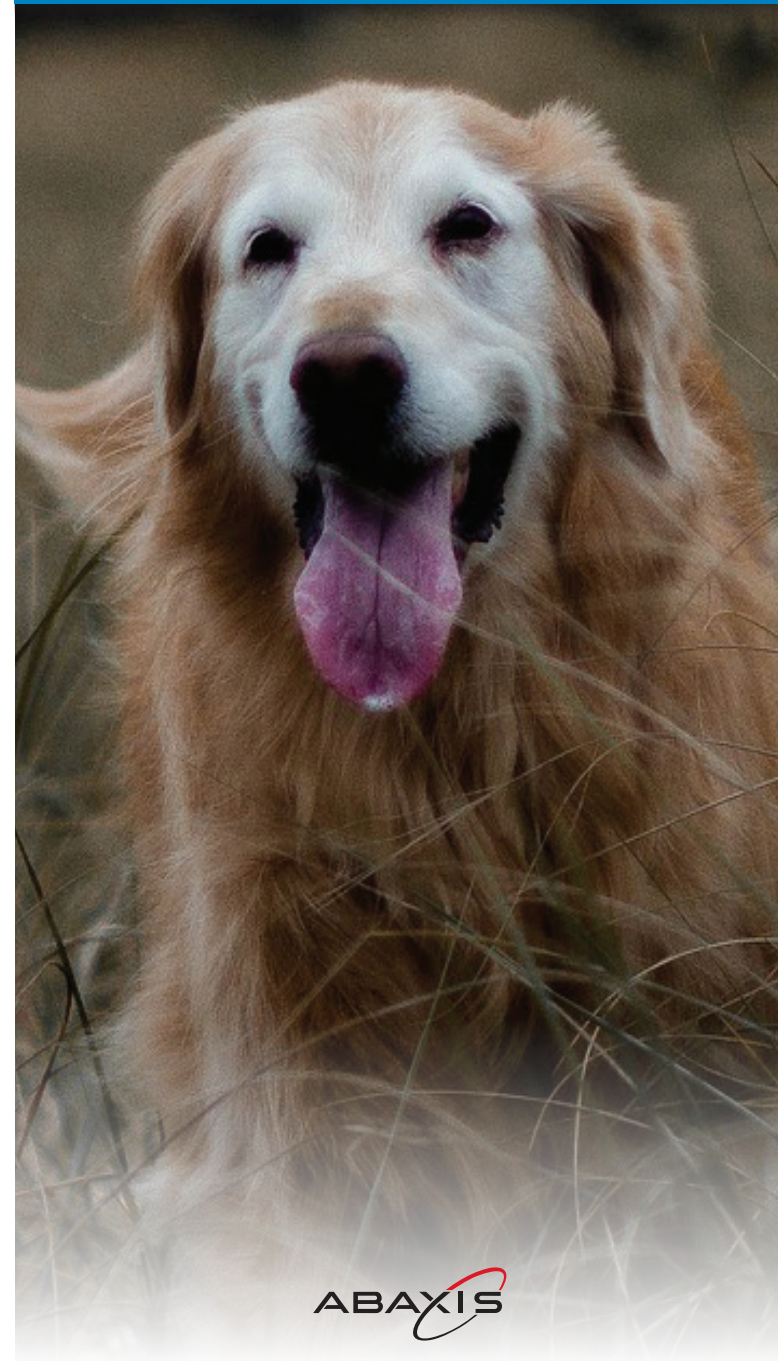
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1. Adapted from Eldredge, Debra M, Carlson, Liisa D. et al. Dog Owner's Home Veterinary Handbook, 4th edition, Wiley, Ames, IA, 2007.

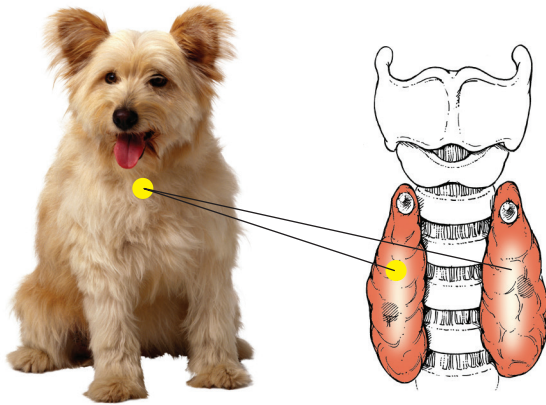
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# A PET OWNER'S GUIDE TO HYPOTHYROID DISEASE



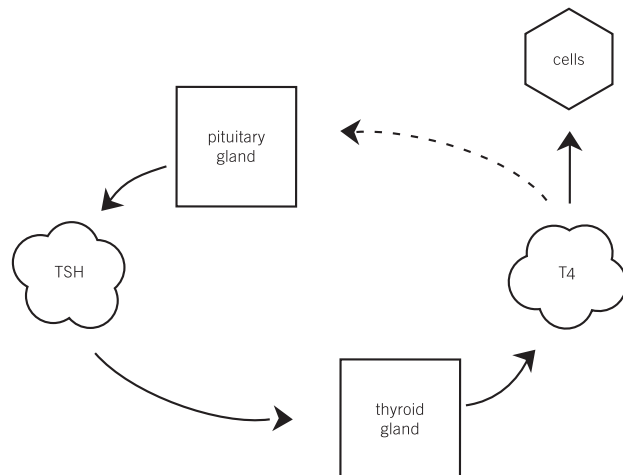
**H**ypothyroid disease, also known as hypothyroidism, is one of the most common hormonal diseases of dogs and can easily be diagnosed with routine blood testing. Although more common in senior dogs, the disease may occur at a young age in certain breeds that are more prone to hypothyroidism.

Regular thyroid disease testing is highly recommended, and it is important to pay close attention to your dog's physical and behavioral changes as he/she ages. Remember to bring any noticeable changes to your veterinarian's attention so they can perform the proper tests for diagnosis.



## The normal thyroid gland

The thyroid gland is small and consists of two glands, one on each side of the trachea in the neck. The thyroid produces hormones called thyroxine (T4) and triiodothyronine (T3). Production of T4 and T3 is controlled by another hormone, called thyroid stimulating hormone (TSH), which is produced by the pituitary gland found at the base of the brain.



## Causes of hypothyroid disease

Hypothyroidism results from the inadequate production and release of thyroid hormones by the thyroid gland. This is usually due to either lymphocytic thyroiditis (thought to be an immune disorder), or idiopathic thyroid atrophy (destruction of the gland due to an unknown cause).

A malfunctioning thyroid gland affects every system in the body, and can impact numerous body functions, including:

- Cardiac function
- Skin health and hair growth
- Metabolic rate
- Neurologic function
- Fat metabolism

## Diagnosing hypothyroid disease

There are many other diseases that have symptoms that are very similar to hypothyroid disease. If your dog has clinical signs and symptoms that may be consistent with hypothyroidism, your veterinarian may recommend the following testing:

### T4 Blood Test

This screens the function of the thyroid gland. A lower than normal level of T4 is consistent with hypothyroidism, and your veterinarian will discuss whether additional tests are needed.

### Chemistry Panel

A full blood panel may reveal other diseases and help your doctor interpret all findings from the physical examination.

### Complete Blood Count (CBC)

Hypothyroid disease can often cause other problems that are important to understand, such as anemia (low red blood cell count), which may need to be treated.

## Treating hypothyroid disease

If hypothyroid disease is confirmed in your pet, a daily medication will be prescribed for the duration of your pet's life. This medication should return your pet's T4 to normal, and prevent the symptoms from returning. With proper management of hypothyroidism, your pet will live a normal lifespan.

## Monitoring hypothyroid disease

Routine monitoring of thyroid level is needed to adjust medication doses, especially during the initial phases of treatment. Your veterinarian will recommend that your pet return for routine T4 testing until the proper dose of medication is determined.

Over time, the T4 level of your pet will continue to be monitored. Your pet may lose weight, or their metabolic requirements may change. Your veterinarian may need to make further adjustments to the dose of medication for your pet. With proper medication and monitoring, your pet's clinical signs will improve, and your pet can enjoy a normal lifespan.

