

# Hypothyroidism and your dog.

## What is Hypothyroidism?

Hypothyroidism is an underactive thyroid gland. The thyroid gland produces thyroxine— a hormone which controls the metabolic rate of your dog. Dogs with hypothyroidism will have a very low metabolic rate, with poor energy levels, weight gain, poor hair growth and a reduced ability to fight infections.

Hypothyroidism is not life-threatening, but if left untreated dogs can become overweight, sluggish and lethargic with poor quality of life . Treating your pet with daily medication is easy and can restore your pet to a fit and active life.



## Treating Hypothyroidism

Your dog will need daily dosing with levo-thyroxine, a manufactured version of the natural hormone thyroxine. The best results are usually seen when the daily dose is given all at once, at the same time each day.

Most dogs do not experience problems, even after taking this medication for a long time. However, this is a powerful drug, with potentially serious side effects if used in the wrong way. Overdosage can result in palpitations (pounding heart), anxiety, restlessness and weight loss.



## Medication Safety

It is advised to wear gloves while handling these drugs, and wash hands after use.

Your dog is likely to need this medication throughout their life. At Riverside, we consider it very important to make sure your dog is monitored regularly, both to make sure the dose is effective and to make sure the medication is not harming your

## Monitoring your dog

Your dog will usually have had a blood screen and thyroid check before the start of treatment. We advise re-testing thyroid levels after 3 weeks on treatment, then again after 2 months. Blood samples need to be taken approximately 5 hours after you normally dose your dog. Your vet will be able to arrange a suitable appointment for you. Before the blood test, continue to dose at your usual time and do not miss a dose.

Once your dog is stable, we recommend testing thyroid levels every 6-12 months. Further tests may be advised if your dog is unwell, or the dose of medication has recently been changed. We recommend a weight check every 3 months for dogs on treatment. This can be carried out at any time during surgery opening hours, and is free of charge.

## Dispensing Advice

- We will need to re-examine your dog at least every six months in order to dispense ongoing medication. The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons issue strict guidelines regarding prescription medications.
- Examinations or tests may need to be more frequent if your dog is unwell, or if his/her dose has changed recently.
- Please try to give us 24 hours notice if you need more medication. All requests need to be approved by a vet, and some medications may need to be ordered in for you.
- We can usually supply up to two months medication at a time.
- All medication fees include a small Medicines Advice Fee. This applies both to medication purchased at Riverside, or from other sources using a prescription. It reflects the time and expertise that goes into preparing your dog's medication, and also the fact that we are responsible for the health and well-being of your dog throughout treatment.
- Do not hesitate to speak to your vet if you are unhappy with your dogs progress. The dose of medication that your dog needs may change throughout their life, even if they have been stable in the past.

