



**What is hyperthyroidism?** Hyperthyroidism is a common problem in older cats. It means they make too much thyroid hormone.

**What signs will I see in my cat?** High thyroid levels make the body feel like it is working harder and faster than normal. The most common signs are increased activity, more meowing, increased hunger, and weight loss. Some cats will have vomiting, diarrhea, or increased thirst. With these changes many cats develop heart disease and high blood pressure.

**How can I help my cat?** We diagnose this disease with a blood test. Because of other changes that happen to your pet's body with this disease we also often look at a pee sample and blood pressure. There are three treatment options:

1. *Iodine Therapy:* This is the gold standard of treatment. It is safe, effective, and for most cats will treat this disease for their life. Your cat will be treated at BEVS in Williston and will need to stay there for 5-10 days for monitoring and care. You can visit <https://bevsvt.com/specialty-services/radioiodine-therapy/> for more information.
2. *Medication:* Medication is given by mouth twice daily **for the remainder of your cat's life**. We can compound this medication into a gel that is placed on the inside of the ear if giving your cat oral medications is not possible. There can be occasional side effects for some cats like vomiting or extreme itchiness.
3. *Surgery:* Surgical removal of the thyroid glands can be an option for pets that cannot have the medication. For most cats no medication is needed after this surgery, but sometimes the gland can regrow after a few years. Ideally we like to control your cat's thyroid disease prior to having surgery.

**What happens after I start to treat my cat?** About 3-4 weeks after starting the medication or having surgery or radioactive iodine treatment we recheck a blood sample as well as a pee test and blood pressure. These tests tell us if we have controlled the thyroid disease or if there are other problems. Cats whose thyroid disease is controlled have a good prognosis and live longer, happier, healthier lives.