



## Mews & News

Fall 2009

### *Greetings!*

Thanks to everyone that came out to our open house in June, and thanks also to everyone who submitted photos for our cat photo contest. It was lots of fun putting together all of the entries, and visitors to our open house had a hard time choosing their favorites!

Be sure to scroll down in this newsletter and check out the latest trivia contest. There is an informative article on feline hyperthyroidism, and the winner of our June photo contest is also featured.

*We hope that you find these newsletters informative and entertaining. However, if you do not wish to receive these quarterly mailings, simply click on the "unsubscribe" button at the end of this e-mail. We promise that we will never share your contact information with anyone, and will only use your e-mail address to send you these quarterly newsletters, or to contact you about your pet.*

*As always, we welcome your feedback. If you have suggestions for how we can improve our newsletter, please call or e-mail us. We'd be happy to hear from you!*



### Spotlight on Hyperthyroidism

Feline hyperthyroidism is a relatively common disease, typically affecting cats over 10 years of age. It is usually caused by a benign tumor of one or both thyroid glands. These tumors produce excess thyroid hormone, which speeds up the cat's metabolism, causing weight loss. Hyperthyroidism, although common today, was not often seen in cats before the 1980's. The cause of this change in prevalence is not known, but there are studies ongoing to try to pinpoint the reason for the shift.

### *Symptoms*

Hyperthyroidism is a disease that most commonly affects cats older than 10 years of age. Affected cats are usually underweight, despite a ravenous appetite. Often, owners will report an increase or change in vocalization habits. Due to the increased metabolism caused by excess thyroid hormone, affected cats will commonly have heart disease, accompanied by a heart murmur. A small thyroid "slip" or nodule can often be palpated on either side of the cat's neck during physical

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examination. This is the enlarged thyroid gland.

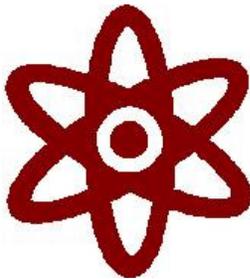
## Diagnosis

Diagnosis of hyperthyroidism is based largely on clinical signs and blood testing. Once the veterinarian suspects hyperthyroidism, based on the history of weight loss and increased appetite, physical exam findings, or other clinical signs, a simple blood test will be submitted to check the cat's thyroid hormone level, or T4. In most cases, the diagnosis is straightforward. However, in some cats with clinical symptoms of hyperthyroidism but a borderline T4 level, advanced testing may be necessary. If your cat has had routine screening senior bloodwork, a T4 level was probably part of this blood testing to screen for early hyperthyroidism.



## Treatment

Hyperthyroidism can be a devastating disease if not treated properly. Luckily, there are several very effective options for treatment.



The "gold standard" treatment for hyperthyroidism in cats is radioactive iodine therapy. This treatment is also commonly used for people with hyperthyroidism. Radioiodine therapy involves the administration of an oral dose of radioactive iodine. The iodine is concentrated into the thyroid gland, where the radiation kills off the overactive thyroid tissue. Usually, enough normal thyroid tissue is spared so that treated cats don't need to take any thyroid supplementation after treatment. While very safe and effective, radioiodine therapy is expensive - usually \$1000-1200. However, when compared to perhaps several years of medication and monitoring bloodwork, the cost of treatment is reasonable. Another drawback to the treatment for some pet owners is the need to leave their cat at the treatment center for several days for treatment. This is necessary due to the radiation given off by the cat's body after treatment with the radioactive iodine. After successful treatment with radioactive iodine, most cats experience a complete cure and require no additional medication or monitoring.

Another treatment for hyperthyroidism is surgery to remove the enlarged thyroid gland. Due to the increasing prevalence of radioiodine treatment centers, surgery is performed less commonly today than in the past. Surgery is usually curative, although there is a risk of immediate post-operative complications, and cats need to be monitored very carefully in the hospital for several days after treatment. Most cats do not require ongoing medication after surgery, although hyperthyroidism can relapse if the cat develops another tumor in the opposite thyroid gland.

The most common treatment for hyperthyroidism is chronic oral medication to prevent the thyroid gland from producing too much thyroid hormone. The medication, called methimazole, is available in the form of a pill, and usually needs to be given twice daily. A blood test is performed 1 month after starting the medication, and then every 6 months thereafter to monitor treatment. For cats that don't take pills well, the medication may be compounded into a liquid form or into a transdermal gel, which is rubbed into the skin in the cat's ear.



## Monitoring



Once a treatment method is chosen, appropriate monitoring can be instituted. After surgery or radioiodine therapy, chronic monitoring is usually not necessary. Blood tests are usually performed 1 month after

the procedure to ensure that the cat is producing adequate thyroid hormone.

For cats taking methimazole, a physical examination and blood test are necessary every 6 months to ensure safe and effective treatment. Some cats can develop kidney disease after treatment for hyperthyroidism, so monitoring is important to detect problems early.

With early diagnosis, appropriate treatment and monitoring, cats with hyperthyroidism can be successfully managed and live normal, healthy lives.

## *Tell me more!*

For more information, here are a few links to get you started:

- [The Hyperthyroidism Center for Cats](#) from Veterinary Partner
- [Medications for hyperthyroidism](#)
- [Surgical treatment for hyperthyroidism](#)
- [Radioiodine thyroid treatment](#)
- [Thyroid carcinoma](#)

## In Memoriam

*In remembrance of our feline friends who have passed away in the past 3 months...*

Amber K.  
 Arthur B.  
 Bonita B.  
 Boris L.  
 Callie R.  
 Critter W.  
 Duke L.  
 Fay H.  
 Jack K.  
 Pickles V.  
 Rosie G.  
 Sephi B.



*Gizmo A.*

Hear our humble prayer,  
 O God,  
 for our friends, the animals,  
 especially for those who are suffering;  
 for any that are lost or deserted  
 or frightened or hungry.

We entreat for them all

Thy mercy and pity,  
and for those who deal with them,  
we ask a heart of compassion  
and gentle hands and kindly words.

Make us, ourselves,  
to be true friends to animals  
and so to share the blessings  
of the merciful.

*Albert Schweitzer*

## Staff Pet Spotlight



### Sabrina

Sabrina is a 5 year old domestic long hair cat that was born at an animal hospital and adopted at birth by our veterinary assistant Hallie and her family. Sabrina loves darting around the house while chasing her balls, begging for treats, and indulging in catnip. Her favorite past time is waking Mom and Dad up in the middle of the night, to bring them her toys.

## Newsletter Trivia

The trivia questions from our last newsletter was *Who was the first president to have a pet cat in the White House, and what was the cat's name?* The correct answer is *Abraham Lincoln*, whose cat *Tabby* was the first pet cat in the White House. Earlier presidents did have outdoor cats, but Tabby was the first pet cat to have the privilege of curling up for a nap in the Lincoln bedroom!



Congratulations to our winners Abby and Shadow! Their owner, Elise Wile, was one of several people to answer our trivia question correctly. She will take home a Furminator deshedding and grooming tool. Hopefully Shadow and Abby are ready for some serious grooming! Thanks to all who participated!



This month's question:

## *Siamese cats were first brought to the West from Thailand in what year?*



The winner of this month's trivia contest will win a \$25 gift certificate for Soldan's Pet Store, good for food, litter, supplies, toys, or anything else in the store that you'd like!

Entries may be submitted by [e-mail](#), phone, fax, or snail mail. Be sure to include your name and phone number along with your answer! Please see our contact information at the top of this newsletter. Entries must be received by September 1st, 2009. If more than 1 correct answer is received, the winner will be chosen at random from among the correct submissions.

### Ask Izzy



*Instead of my usual question and answer column, I'd like to use my space to thank all of you who came out to our open house this summer. We had lots of visitors, and it was so much fun to watch all the happenings from my window perch. Hallie did some incredible face painting for the kids, Claudia and Mary had kitty crafts on display, and the animal shelter was here with cats for adoption.*





Thanks to all of the open house visitors who also voted in our photo contest!

We had 39 photographs submitted by our clients. Congratulations to the winner, Ann Norman, who submitted a picture of her old cat, George, taking a snooze in the closet. Clearly, George was a very resourceful cat, who knew a good napping place when he saw it! Ann took home a brand new rolling cat carrier for her cats. Thanks to all those who submitted entries.



*Enjoy the rest of the summer. I'll be sure to get in as much fresh air time at my open window as I can before the cold weather comes!*

Signed,

*Izzy*

[Send Izzy your question](#) today!

## The Last Word...



### *Traveling with your cat?*

Summer and fall are seasons that see many of our clients traveling with their cats. Remember that if you are traveling to another state with your cat, you are legally required to have a health certificate for your cat. A health certificate is a legal government document that is completed by the veterinarian. A physical examination must be performed on your cat at the time that the health certificate is issued. Health certificates are valid for 30 days. Health certificates are required for cats traveling to another state by car as well as by air, even though you may never be asked to show the document.

Requirements for air travel vary between airlines, but most require a health certificate completed within 10 days before the scheduled flight. Check with your airline for their specific

requirements. You will also need to make sure that your cat carrier meets the airline's specifications.

For travel to Canada by car, an updated rabies certificate is all that is legally required. If your cat is up-to-date on rabies vaccination, just call us for a current rabies certificate.

Remember, if you are traveling and don't want to take your cat with you or leave him at home alone, we do offer boarding for cats only. Included in your cat's stay is access to our large and sunny playroom, bedding, food, toys, and treats. Call 517-347-2287 to make a reservation.

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