

CANINE HYPOTHYROIDISM

WHAT IS HYPOTHYROIDISM?

Hypothyroidism is a disease caused by a reduction in the activity of the thyroid gland, which no longer produces sufficient amounts of thyroid hormone. It is a relatively common disease in dogs that develops mainly in adult individuals. Dogs of all sexes and breeds can be affected, although there is a predisposition for large dogs.

THE CAUSES

The causes of thyroid malfunction are diverse and not yet all clarified. In a minority of cases, the problem is due to a tumor of the gland itself, but in most cases, the malfunction is the result of an immune attack that destroys the glandular tissue and induces thyroid atrophy.

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

The complaints associated with hypothyroidism vary greatly depending on the affected individual and the state of progress of the disease. Skin lesions are represented by a progressive absence of regrowth of hair and its subsequent absence in the areas most subject to wear and tear (tail, back of the nose, neck in dogs wearing collars). Over time, alopecia tends to extend and, due to a decreased efficiency of the immune system, individuals can easily contract bacterial infections (pyoderma).

Other symptoms commonly observed in the course of hypothyroidism are weight gain, decreased tolerance to cold, fatigue and lethargy or a tendency to inactivity.

The dog generally has a body temperature lower than normal and a slower heart rate

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DIAGNOSIS

The diagnosis of hypothyroidism is made with a thorough clinical examination and specific tests. These are obtained by sending a blood sample to a laboratory that measures the concentration of thyroid hormones and TSH hormone, produced by the pituitary gland, which normally stimulates the thyroid gland function.