



## HORMONES

**JUST LIKE US, A CAT'S ENDOCRINE SYSTEM RELEASES HORMONES THAT REGULATE BEHAVIOR, MOODS AND BODILY FUNCTIONS.**

Hormones have an essential role in maintaining health, which includes metabolism, reproduction, behavior and growth. To learn more about the role hormones play in the reproductive cycle, moods and behavior check out [The Pros & Cons of Spaying and Neutering.](#)

## METABOLISM

The hormone thyroxine regulates a cat's metabolism. If thyroxine levels are high, this leads to an increased appetite. Low levels of thyroxine cause a decrease in appetite. Factors such as age, activity level, hormone levels, certain diseases, health issues, caloric intake, sterilization or whether they are pregnant or nursing all affect metabolism. Blood glucose levels are regulated by insulin. In their first year kittens are growing rapidly and will have a high metabolism. It is essential for proper growth and development that they receive a kitten food that is balanced and complete. After a year of age your veterinarian may recommend a slight decrease in food as they transition to an adult cat food. Sterilization is suspected to

decrease the metabolic rate. Routine veterinary care will help to insure your cat's dietary changes can be implemented as needed. Middle aged cats are considered to be in the 4 to 9 year range. During this time their metabolism usually slows and their caloric needs may decrease. Exercise and stimulation are important to insure optimal health. Senior cats generally have an increased metabolism and will need more calories to maintain their correct weight.

## OBESITY & DIABETES

Can cats become obese? Yes, about 60% of household cats in the United States are classified as obese. Proper exercise and diet are essential to providing a good foundation to help prevent obesity. Obesity is linked to additional health issues such as diabetes, arthritis, cancer, bladder stones and respiratory disease. Overfeeding is most often the cause of obesity. Always consult with your veterinarian before starting a weight loss program. Rapid weight loss can lead to hepatic lipidosis, also known as fatty liver disease that can be life threatening. If you notice your cat has not eaten in more than 24 hours and is obese consult with your veterinarian. Hyperthyroidism is when the metabolism is increased and cats can experience weight loss even when eating normally or more than usual. Obese cats are at a higher risk for diabetes too. Diabetes may cause blood sugar imbalances and rapid weight loss. Cancer cachexia is a cancer that can cause a cat to lose fat and muscle at equal rates. A change in metabolism can be the first sign of this complex issue. [\*\*Nurturing a Thriving Maine Coon\*\*](#) has several helpful tips for your cat's optimal health and well being. Wellness exams are an important part of caring for your cat and can help you to work closely with your veterinarian to make sure your cat is receiving the correct diet at all life stages. If you notice your cat experiencing metabolic issues always consult with your veterinarian right away.