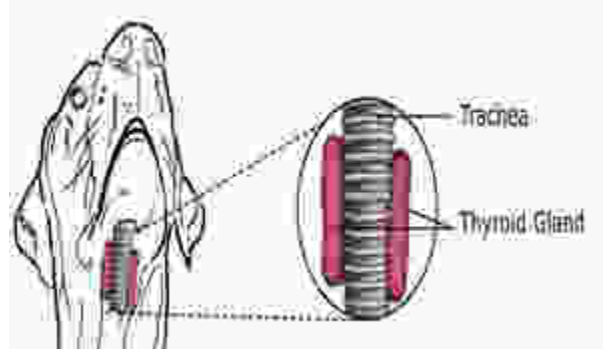


# Dr. Dodds' Email Interview on Hypothyroidism

If you've read Karen Grzenda's book "Heart Dog – Gunner's Story", then you know of the near-death struggle she had with her Doberman Pinscher, Gunner, getting a hypothyroidism diagnosis. You'll also understand why she is such an active advocate, "spreading the knowledge" about Hypothyroidism.

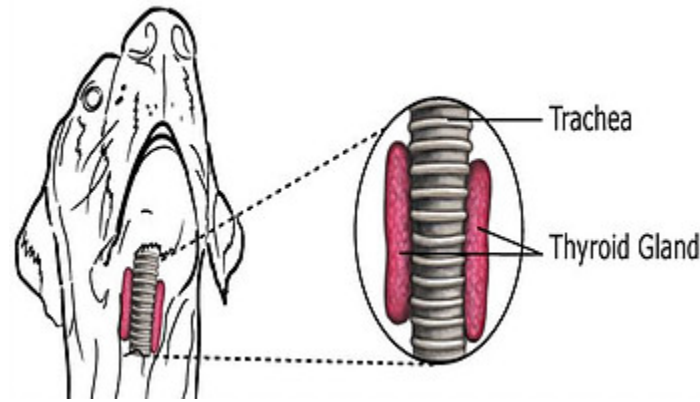


Simply put, by taking the time to read and then share this article, you COULD save a life! **Don't take that statement lightly!**

She spent thousands of dollars on her beloved Gunner as he got sicker, to the point where she considered euthanizing him. Once Gunner was diagnosed, and under veterinarian-monitored care, she continued to medicate him as prescribed for

years before learning the dosage was too high. He succumbed to DCM (Dilated

Cardiomyopathy) at only 7 years old. **If only she'd known then what she knows (and shares freely with others) now!**



A few months ago, she started a website and blog of dog-related information to quickly disseminate what she's learned and to provide resources for people in need. Many blog entries are focused specifically on "Hypothyroidism in Canines"

because it has had such an immense impact on her & her canines' lives. Hypothyroidism is life changing, yet commonly misdiagnosed.

She excitedly interviewed Dr. Dodds of Hemopet (based out of California, USA) in July 2019. Below is a copy of their correspondence. For ease of reading, Karen's words are in normal fonts and Dr. Dodds' are bold and in **colour <red>**. Additional resources are listed at the end.

**Dear Karen: Hi! Off to Milan for a doggie 'expo' fund raiser tomorrow morning - so answering now! Hugs, Jean**

1) In layman`s terms – what is hypothyroidism? **"hypo" means "low", so hypothyroidism means low thyroid function.**

2) What is the test I should get to see if my dog is hypothyroid? **Always a full thyroid profile not just a total T4.** What should it include? **Total T4, free T4, Total T3, free T3 and TgAA (thyroglobulin autoantibody) tested annually.**

3) Why is getting a thyroid full panel result analyzed from Hemopet different than other labs? **Because we automatically provide the age – and breed type - specific normal ranges as well as the general normal ranges for all dogs. Also, our thyroid testing is patented worldwide, and does not use any radioisotopes that can leach into and contaminate the earth.**

4) If we get our dogs tests done in a different lab, can we fax (or e-mail) the results to Hemopet for their analyzation and input? **Sure! Cost? A small donation to Hemopet is always appreciated, but not required.**

5) Why do vets typically do a T4 test if its inconclusive or inaccurate? **Often because they are uninformed or ‘sold’ on it for ease of testing and cheaper price - the educational void is huge! Also, they often expect to see the classical clinical signs of more advanced hypothyroidism (fat, lazy and hates the cold) rather than diagnose the earlier phase of subtle weight gain, poor skin and coat, and abnormal behavior (young adult onset of phobias, aggression, seizures)! Sigh!**

6) Can all dogs have hypothyroidism? **Yes, but certain breeds have a higher risk than others.**

7) What causes hypothyroidism? **Progressive destruction of thyroid tissue by heritable autoimmune thyroiditis (inflammation of the gland by immune-targeted lymphocytes) or just gradual idiopathic thyroid atrophy.**

8) I have read that there are over 70 signs and symptoms of hypothyroidism, how many signs or symptoms should I see in my dog before I get a full panel done? **Ha! Even one obvious one is enough. See answer to question 5.**

9) What’s the youngest dog you’ve seen be hypothyroid? **4-5 months.** Is testing different for puppies? **No, but the reference norms are different (should be higher as the puppy is still growing and maturing through adolescence.** Can a puppy be born with hypothyroidism? **Yes, but it’s very rare.**

10) If my dog’s test comes back “low normal” but is showing symptoms, should I still treat with thyroid supplementation? **Depends upon the individual case – a 6-8-week clinical trial of twice daily thyroxine can be tried.**

11) Someone suggested I put my dog on thyroid medication for a few months because they were “borderline” and said if it didn’t work out, I could stop giving the meds. Is this true? **Yes, as the thyroid gland should return to its original capacity (whatever that was) in 6 weeks.** Or will giving thyroid meds and stopping hurt my dog? **No.**

12) What will happen if my dog is hypothyroid and I don't give them thyroid supplementation? **Unwise = progressive health breakdown, including behavioral changes.**

13) I think my dog may be getting too much thyroid supplementation, what is the correct thyroid supplementation dosage and is it the same for all breeds and ages? **Not the same for all breed and ages – puppies usually require more than adults and more than geriatrics; geriatrics require less; small breeds require more than large and giant breeds; and sighthounds require less than other breed types. Typical medium sized adult dog takes 0.1 mg thyroxine per 12-15 pounds of optimum weight given twice daily apart from foods or treats that contain calcium or soy to ensure absorption.**

14) My vet said it doesn't matter if I give the pills with or without food as long as I'm consistent (**sorry – that's just incorrect**) but I notice you advise to give pills either 1 hour before food or 3 hours after, why? **Because the drug, thyroxine, binds to calcium and soy which delays and impairs its absorption.**

15) Can hypothyroidism cause DCM if left untreated or if dosage has been too high? **Either situation can affect cardiac function.**

16) I want to breed my bitch and all health testing required has been done on both the female and male. Both my female and the male chosen have been shown in venues and are excellent examples of the breed. My female is on supplementation though for having a "low normal" thyroid. Does this mean all her puppies will have hypothyroidism? **No, typical odds are 50/50 with a large number of such offspring, but in any one litter the odds are unpredictable. Should I still breed her? Only if she was TgAA negative before she started taking the thyroxine.**

17) My dog was diagnosed as low thyroid and put on supplementation, we retested but the "numbers" don't look so good, yet my dog is doing fabulous! Should I stay where we are or try a different med level? **Stay where you are - treat the patient not the lab numbers. Also, it depends upon what tests were done after he/she started the medication and if the testing was done at 4-6 hrs post-pill (the peak therapeutic response timing)?**

18) My dog has been on thyroid supplementation for a few years now and his/her test results of the full panel look great but there still seems to be symptoms. They're much improved, but still there. Why? **Maybe some other non-thyroidal issue has arisen.**

19) I feed a raw diet that includes necks, and sometimes I buy esophagus as a treat. I heard this can cause problems in dogs, why? **It's the throat or gullet part of a red raw meat carcass that contains the thyroid gland which can cause dietary-induced hyperthyroidism when eaten.**

20) Are there ANY foods, treats or natural supplements that I should stay away from if my dog is on thyroid medication? Human medication states no calcium or iron within four hours of medications. Is this different for dogs? **No, the same (plus soy) as it reflects the behavior of the drug (hormone) and not the species that takes it.**

21) I have a German Shepherd who was diagnosed with degenerative myelopathy (DM) and recently also hypothyroidism. He's been on thyroid meds for a month now and his DM is better! Does that mean he doesn't have DM? **Possibly, but more likely the clinical signs from the muscle weakness of DM are partially lessened by stimulating his cellular metabolism with the thyroxine.**

22) My Doberman was diagnosed with Wobbler's and also hypothyroidism. Now that he is being medicated it seems like the Wobbler's is gone. Is this possible? **Same answer as in number 21), but for the cervical vertebral instability of Wobbler's.**

23) Is there any research currently being done on hypothyroidism? **Not much of note beyond looking at the specific gene loci involved in certain breeds.**

24) An article I've seen pop up several times says once-a-day dosing is okay. Is it? **Never – is not the optimal therapy.** For all size dogs? **Nope, the half-life of thyroxine in dogs is only 12-16 hrs (unlike people), so giving the hormone once daily (at twice the dose) creates an undesirable 'peak and valley effect' in the body.**

25) Can a dog miss a dose and immediately start to show signs like aggression or anxiety? **Unlikely, but it could happen.**

26) I have had a number of dogs in my life - three have tested and subsequently treated for hypothyroidism. Going forward, and understanding how rampant hypothyroidism is, I feel that should I ever get another dog, I should do a full panel thyroid test at the first visit and every year after, even if the dog seems perfectly healthy. **Bravo!** I feel this will provide a "baseline" that can be compared every year to changes. Do you think that's overdoing it? **Not at all, makes perfect medical and scientific sense.**

27) Do you have anything you'd like to add? **Whew!!**

## Additional Resources:

### Hemopet

www.hemopet.org

Email: [info@hemopet.org](mailto:info@hemopet.org)

11561 Salinaz Ave

Garden Grove, CA 92843

### BOOK: The Canine Thyroid Epidemic:

Answers you Need for Your Dog

Dr. Dodds and Diana R Laverdure,

available now through Amazon.com