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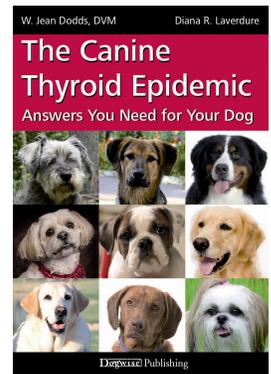
## *The Canine Thyroid Epidemic*

### Ch. 1—Canine Thyroid Disease: A Misunderstood “Epidemic”

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From seizures and obesity to chronic infections, mood swings, and a wide range of other serious conditions, our dogs are being ravaged by a debilitating and confounding “epidemic.” And, we humans have a lot to do with it. We are breeding them, feeding them, and rearing them toward a life of genetic weakness, ill health, and an inability to tolerate their toxic environments.

The question is, “Where do we go from here?” Are we going to perpetuate the misunderstandings and misconceptions of the past 30 years and allow “man’s best friend” to continue to succumb to sickness? Or are we going to create a new awareness that will enable all of us—veterinary professionals and laypeople alike—to break the cycle of disease and give our dogs back the birthright of their health?

Dogs have been hanging out with humans and enriching our lives for more than 10 thousand years. This bond of caring and love has continued to blossom through the centuries, with our canine friends showering us with unconditional love, affection, and devotion. At the same time, they put their trust in us to do what is right for them. So now, as we strive for longer, healthier, and happier lives for ourselves, let’s remember to include our canine friends in this quest.

This book will give you the knowledge, understanding, and tools you need to identify canine thyroid disease and proactively participate in your dog’s diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up care. No longer will you feel helpless, knowing in your gut that something is wrong, but not knowing quite what it is. And no longer will your beloved canine have to endure needless suffering due to misunderstanding and misdiagnosis.

Let’s start this journey toward our dogs’ wellness by taking a closer look at the thyroid gland and its functions in the body.

#### **What is the thyroid gland?**

The thyroid gland is part of the endocrine system, the collection of glands that produces all of our body’s hormones. Together, the endocrine glands control almost every cellular function. The glands that make up the endocrine system are:

- Pituitary (also called the major “master gland” because it controls several other glands)
- Hypothalamus
- Thyroid (a secondary master gland)
- Parathyroids
- Adrenals
- Pineal body
- Reproductive glands (ovaries and testes)

The thyroid, a secondary master gland to the pituitary gland, is located in the upper third of the neck. It is shaped roughly like a butterfly or a bow tie and is about the size of a lima bean. This, of course, varies slightly depending on the size of the dog (see Figure 1). The size of the thyroid gland increases during pregnancy.

**Dr. W. Jean Dodds** received the D.V.M. degree with honors in 1964 from the Ontario Veterinary College, University of Toronto. She is the owner of Hemopet, the first nonprofit national blood bank program for animals. She and her husband live in Santa Monica, California.

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