

Radioiodine I-131 Treatment: The Best Solution for Feline Hyperthyroidism

Hyperthyroidism: A Brief Overview

The thyroid gland, in cats as in humans, produces hormones that are vital to maintaining normal growth and metabolism. Occasionally, a tumor forms on the thyroid that causes the gland to produce abnormally high levels of these hormones. Cats with hyperthyroidism frequently exhibit any or all of these symptoms: behavioral changes, increased or decreased appetite, weight loss, rapid heart rate, increased consumption of water and urinary output, excessive shedding, and diarrhea. Hyperthyroidism can be fatal if left untreated.

Other Treatment Options For Hyperthyroidism

Until recently, only two forms of treatment have been available. Medical treatment for management of this disease consists of long-term administration of a medication called Tapazole. While this medication is great for maintaining a hyperthyroid patient, it is not without disadvantages. Tapazole must be administered by mouth twice daily (which can be difficult for cat owners), can cause nausea and vomiting, and can cause long-term damage to the liver and/or kidneys. Blood work must be performed regularly to monitor the effectiveness of the medication. But, most significantly, Tapazole cannot cure the disease, and the tumor is unaffected.

Surgical removal of the thyroid gland (thyroidectomy) is another option. However, the symptoms and side effects of hyperthyroidism often place these cats in extreme anesthetic risk.

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Treatment With Radioiodine (I-131)

Fortunately, there is a safer, easier way to cure hyperthyroidism! Radioiodine (I-131) is a radioactive isotope used to dissolve thyroid tumors while leaving normal tissue unaffected. Over 97% of all cats treated never need future treatment. There are few side effects, but the primary disadvantage to I-131 is isolation of the patient for a short period of time. Normal thyroid function should return within four weeks.

The treatment is very simple and involves only a single, oral dose of medication! Your cat is required by law to stay with us for three days, but will receive plenty of TLC during that time. We will call you every evening your cat is with us to give you updates, and your pet's progress will be monitored daily by specially trained medical personnel. The cost of therapy includes a discussion of therapy options, interpretation of radiographs, physical examination, the radioiodine treatment, hospitalization, meals, health and radiation monitoring, and your daily updates.

By the end of three days, the radiation levels from the treatment are low enough for your cat to go home. At discharge, you will receive detailed instructions for the care of your pet over the next few weeks. Any post-treatment test results will be discussed with you and your referring veterinarian.

Advantages of Radioiodine I-131 Treatment

- Thyroid function is usually returned to normal, thus, curing the disease of hyperthyroidism
- Thyroid tumors are destroyed regardless of their location
- Normal tissue is unaffected
- No anesthetic risk involved
- Administration of daily medication is eliminated
- More cost effective than other treatment options

Please call GVS for any additional information about I-131 treatment for hyperthyroidism.

AREA MAP

