New Client Information

Radioactive Iodine Therapy (I-131)

Radioactive iodine (I-131) therapy is a treatment for cats with hyperthyroidism. I-131 therapy is noninvasive (compared to surgery) and usually only one dose is enough to return the animal to a normal thyroid state (compared to on-going daily administration of anti-thyroidal medication). Cats typically return to a normal thyroid state two to four months after I-131 treatment.

Methimazole

Methimazole is a drug used to treat hyperthyroidism. Generally before I-131 therapy, your cat will need a trial period of methimazole to make sure the kidneys can handle the I-131 treatment. However, it is best to discontinue methimazole (under the guidance of your regular veterinarian) prior to I-131 treatment.

We recommend a one week washout of methimazole prior to treatment with radioactive iodine.

Scheduling an appointment

Appointments can be scheduled by emailing OSUVET.InternalMedicine@osu.edu.

You will receive an email in return explaining the different options available to you, as well as pricing and a copy of our frequently asked questions.

Appointments take place on Mondays to allow the I-131 injection to be done on Tuesday, if your pet is a candidate.

Our appointment options and estimated costs

- If no workup is needed (your veterinarian performs CBC, Profile, T4, UA, +/- Thoracic radiographs; ALL within four weeks of treatment):
  - $1425-$1650 including hospital stay (Monday through Friday)

- If workup is done at the Veterinary Medical Center:
  - $1650-$1880 including hospital stay (Monday through Friday)

At your appointment

During the appointment, a senior veterinary student will take your cat’s medical history. Afterward they will take your cat to the internal medicine suite where a physical exam will be performed by the student and clinician on the case. Once completed, the case is discussed with the faculty clinician and a plan of care is made.

The clinician and student will discuss the personalized plan for your cat with you. If your cat is a candidate for the I-131 treatment, the cat will spend the night with us and have the injection first thing Tuesday morning.

After I-131 administration, your cat is transported to an isolation ward to comply with State of Ohio radiation safety regulations. During isolation, you will not be able to visit your pet. A senior veterinary student and radiology personnel will care for your cat. Your cat’s radiation level will be monitored daily.

Your cat will be released to you when their radiation level is below 50 mR/hr at the skin surface over the thyroid glands (usually four to seven days after I-131 administration).
New Client Information

Radioactive Iodine Therapy (I-131) - continued

At-home care

The radioactive material administered to your pet is part of the treatment of their condition and is beneficial to them. However, it is important that no one be unnecessarily exposed to radiation. Radiation safety precautions must be taken until the date given to you at time of discharge.

As the owner, you will be asked to sign a consent form at time of admission stating that you are accepting responsibility for the protection of yourself and other persons who may be in contact with your pet.

The consent form will state that you will comply with the following:

- Your pet must continuously wear a collar (given to you at time of discharge) warning of the presence of radioactivity.
- Your pet must be strictly confined to your house or residence with no access to bedrooms.
- You must limit close contact with your pet to brief periods of time for necessary care and no more than 10 minutes per day for 21 days after release from the hospital. You must wash your hands carefully after handling your pet, your pet’s food dishes or litter pan.
- Your pet must not be in contact with children or pregnant women for 30 days after injection.

Your cooperation is needed in order to comply with federal regulations regarding radiation safety, to reduce human exposure to a minimum, and to allow for the continued availability of this treatment.

Follow-up care

We recommend a recheck with either your regular veterinarian or with the VMC Internal Medicine service one month after treatment. At this time, the cat’s thyroid level will be checked, along with kidney function. Based on these results, additional monitoring of your pet’s kidney function may be recommended.