

I131 at VCA - Capital Area Veterinary Emergency Service

The Preferred First Line Therapy for Hyperthyroid Cats

Client Information

1. Why is Iodine 131 (I131) the preferred method?

Iodine 131 is now the standard of care for cats with hyperthyroidism. I131 has shown to dramatically increase the life expectancy of cats with hyperthyroidism. The average life expectancy for methimazole therapy is 2 years where I131 is 4 years. I131 is 95% effective. Most of the patients who do not respond to a first treatment with I131 can be successfully treated for a second time.

Other therapies such as surgery, methimazole, and Hills y/d diet have potential side effects.

Surgery's disadvantages include:

- Anesthesia required
- Surgical procedure / tissue damage and healing
- High probability of recurrence (often requires additional I-131 treatment)
- Does not treat ectopic thyroid tissue
- Hypocalcemia from loss of parathyroid tissue

Methimazole disadvantages include:

- Patient must be "pilled" one to three times a day for the rest of his/her life.
- Cost can run from \$600-\$900 a year for medications and medical monitoring.
- Does not cure the disease.
- Side effects are common (approximately 18%) and can include anorexia, vomiting, lethargy, bleeding, liver disease, low platelet counts, and low white blood cell counts.

Y/d diet disadvantages include:

- The food is expensive and it is the exclusive 100% for the affected cat. In multiple cat households, this may be hard to do (or expensive).
- Food may not be palatable to your pet.
- Long term studies are not yet completed for cats.

I131 is best suited as a first line therapy for stable patients without significant heart disease, GI disease, kidney disease, and liver disease.

Our program includes a pre-treatment exam, review of the diagnostic findings, the I131 treatment, hospitalization in our nuclear medicine ward and consultation with the referring veterinarian on the post-treatment T4 testing.

2. Cost.

The fee for the pre-treatment consultation, I131 injection, stay in the nuclear medicine ward, and nursing care is \$1776.55. This needs to be paid in full at the time of admission. We accept cash, check, VISA, MasterCard and Discover. We cannot bill or accept held checks for this service.

A deposit of \$776.55 must be received by noon Thursday the week before treatment.

Not included in the price is the pre-treatment and post-treatment testing by your regular veterinarian. Additional costs can be expected for emergency medical testing, procedures or medications needed by the patient during their stay with us.

3. Diagnostic work we need (provided by your regular veterinarian).

- Blood work must be within a 3 month time period of the treatment date.
- Thyroid level (T4). If your pet is on thyroid medication (methimazole or PTU), they must be off it for 1 week prior to the T4 level.
- Complete Blood Count
- Thoracic x-rays
- Biochemical Profile
- Urinalysis

4. Please bring the following with you.

- Favorite food for 1 week, including treats.
- Bedding (non-returnable). Please make it no larger than 2 feet x 2 feet.
- If requested by your regular veterinarian, chest x-rays.
- **PLEASE BRING YOUR CAT IN A CARRIER!** This is required for drop-off and pickup.

5. When can my cat come home?

We will monitor your pet's radiation level during their stay with us. Your pet will be released once they have reached a safe radiation level according to State and Federal requirements. Typically, this is 5-6 days.

Cats that are dismissed do have a slightly higher radiation level than the normal background level. Because of this, certain precautions need to be taken for two weeks after dismissal.

CATS CANNOT BE RELEASED EARLY UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES!

6. Can I visit my cat during their stay?

State and Federal requirements prohibit you from visiting your pet while under our care. You can 'virtually' visit them via our website at www.i131nh.com. And we welcome you calling daily for an update on your pet.

7. Are there any follow-up visits at your facility?

No, we operate as a referral practice for the I131. Your regular veterinarian will perform both the pre-treatment and post-treatment care and testing.

8. Cancellation Notice on your part.

We require cancellation notification by 4:00 p.m. Thursday before your pet's stay. The I131 injections are specifically ordered for your cat and cannot be returned or reused. If we do not receive a cancellation notice in time, you will be charged \$776.55.

Contact Information:

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