



## VETERINARY REFERRAL CENTRE

### **What is Hyperthyroidism?**

Hyperthyroidism is where the thyroid glands, one on either side of the neck, are overactive. This is a common disease in cats and humans. The thyroid glands are intimately involved in regulating the body's metabolism so if they are overactive, your cat's metabolic rate will be abnormally high which can lead to serious problems such as hyperactivity, weight loss, increased appetite and drinking, behavioural changes, poor hair coat, lethargy, fever, heart disease, vomiting or diarrhoea

### **How is Hyperthyroidism treated?**

In the past, hyperthyroidism has been treated with daily medication or surgery to remove the thyroid glands (thyroidectomy) including if necessary cancerous thyroid tissue in the chest. Neither surgery or medical treatment consistently eliminates hyperthyroidism however and indeed both have potentially serious risks associated with them. Just one injection of Radioiodine safely destroys all cancerous thyroid tissue wherever it occurs in 95-98% of cases!

Radioiodine treatment is the administration of a radioactive iodine solution which is given simply as a single subcutaneous injection in just the same way as your cat gets its annual vaccination. In the case of the radioiodine injection, we will sedate your cat, if necessary, prior to the injection to make the procedure as safe as possible for our staff and indeed your cat!

The radioactivity in the injection then is preferentially taken up by the cancerous thyroid glands in the neck and indeed any other cancerous thyroid tissue that may exist anywhere else in the body - it is not unusual to get some cancerous thyroid cells in the chest for example. This then effects a complete cure in approx. 95-98% of cats! Put very simply, radioiodine treatment is the GOLD STANDARD for treatment of hyperthyroidism in cats. And indeed, in humans too!

THE VETERINARY REFERRAL CENTRE, GODSTONE HIGHWAY DEPOT  
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## **What are the advantages of radioiodine treatment over surgery or medical management?**

- It is the only treatment that consistently removes ALL cancerous thyroid cells no matter where they are in the body
- There are no significantly harmful side effects - Really!
- No daily tableting
- No anaesthesia
- No post-operative complications
- Is cost effective over the lifetime of your cat

## **What needs to be done before Radioiodine Treatment?**

1. Your cat must have a high T4 on a sample sent to an external lab.
2. Your cat's general health must be good. During the time that your cat is with us we are not able to handle him or her very much because of the radioactivity. We are not able to groom cats and while their tablets may be placed in food, they cannot be given directly. We do not want cats to become unwell when they are with us because we cannot treat them without exposing our veterinary staff to high levels of radioactivity. Therefore, if your cat has significant medical problems, other than hyperthyroidism, he or she may not be suitable for this treatment.
3. Your vet will send us all blood and urine tests to us prior to your appointment. We will review those tests and depending on the results we may repeat all or some if we feel it necessary. Assessing renal function is particularly important at this stage. Hyperthyroidism boosts the metabolism and can hide problems such as kidney failure. We will also be checking for common complications of hyperthyroidism such as high blood pressure or significant heart disease. So, your cat will get a full "Geriatric MOT" if you like!
4. You need to stop all anti-thyroid medication or diet 2 weeks before your appointment for radioiodine treatment. Your cat must also be up to date with cat flu vaccinations.

## **What does the treatment cost?**

The treatment cost is £2,691.34 including VAT. A deposit of £500 is required at the time of booking. This is a non-refundable deposit unless a cancellation or postponement is made 2 or more weeks before the treatment date or the patient is deemed not suitable for radioiodine therapy. The cost includes:

- Consultation and evaluation of all case records including any referred patient x-rays
- Radioiodine treatment and regular radiation monitoring
- Hospitalisation
- Daily care and feeding including as much love and virtual cuddles as we possibly can, given
- the restraints put on us by the radioactivity.

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**NOT INCLUDED:-** If needed, additional X-rays, echocardiography (Heart Scan), emergency medical tests or procedures or medications needed during hospitalisation are not included in the above cost. In addition, any treatment or tests such as T4 and other tests for example at your own vet are not covered and will need to be paid for separately.

### **When can I visit and when can I take my cat home?**

Unfortunately, you will not be allowed to visit your cat during the stay in the radioiodine ward. This is to protect you during that period when the radiation levels are relatively high. Strict Ionising Radiation Regulations will not permit such visits.

We will however be striving for your pet to be home with you as soon as possible but not until the level of radiation decreases to a level safe enough to be allowed home. That can vary somewhat from one cat to another, but we expect a period of roughly 7-10 days or even less. Before your pet is sent home, you will be required to sign a form which explains how you need to manage your pet once released. The conditions include:

- Your pet will be kept indoors ideally in an unoccupied room and use a litter-tray for approx. 2 weeks  
You wear rubber gloves when handling your cat's litter tray and waste. The waste should be double bagged and stored for one month before being put out for collection by your local council bin collectors. This should be stored in a secure outside storage area (garage, shed) in a suitable container with a secure lid.
- You will ensure that children or pregnant females will not be allowed near your pet or the litter tray
- You will ensure that you do not spend large amounts of time cuddling or petting your cat for approx. 1 week - as a guide, less than 1 hour per day

### **What happens after I take my cat home?**

\*You will need to visit your own vet 4-6 weeks after your cat is discharged to check the blood pressure and kidney function. If all is normal at this exam, then you only need to have your cat checked every 3-6 months thereafter at your vet.

For those uncommon cases that are not completely cured by 6 months' post treatment (remember the success rate is 95-98%!), we will treat them a second time at a reduced cost.

\*Rarely, cats can develop hypothyroidism - this is usually easily managed with medication. Indeed, we use a low dose of radioactive iodine which helps even more to lessen this risk!

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