CLIENT & VETERINARIAN INFORMATION

RADIOACTIVE IODINE TREATMENT

The Animal Radiology Clinic has offered the treatment of choice for cats with hyperthyroidism since 1990, making it one of the most experienced treatment centers in the country. We were instrumental in gaining approval from the Texas State Bureau of Radiation Control to allow this treatment to be given to cats. The treatment involves injecting the animal with a radioactive iodine drug. Relief of symptoms begins within just a few days and the cure rate is extremely high. This is the preferred treatment method for cats as well as humans with most forms of hyperthyroidism.

What are the advantages of this treatment? No surgery or anesthesia is required. The radioactive iodine is absorbed mainly by the abnormal cells in the thyroid glands, and the radiation energy destroys them. The normal healthy cells do not absorb the radioactive material and are preserved. They eventually begin producing normal amounts of thyroid hormone. Side effects from radiation are uncommon and may include temporary sore throat or rarely, permanent voice change.

What are the disadvantages? After the injection the pet will be slightly radioactive for a short period of time (about 3-4 weeks). The Animal Radiology Clinic will care for your cat at our facility initially, when the radioactivity is the highest. When the animal's radioactivity has decreased to the level that the risk to you and your family is minimal, the animal will be allowed to go home. The time required for elimination of the radioactive material is quite variable from cat to cat. The typical length of stay is 3 to 6 days.

What else do I need to know about hyperthyroidism? 1. Heart damage from the high T4 hormone levels occurs in many cats, often without outward symptoms. This damage is usually reversible after treatment. But meanwhile there could be risk of stroke, heart failure, or even sudden death. To determine whether your cat has cardiac complications, additional testing such as blood pressure measurement, x-rays, or echocardiogram may be recommended at the time of the initial examination here, and will be determined on a case-by-case basis. If heart disease is present, appropriate treatment will be prescribed to minimize the risk prior to radioiodine therapy.

2. During recovery after treatment of hyperthyroidism, kidney function may deteriorate. This is true regardless of the form of treatment used -- surgery, Tapazole pills or gel, or radioiodine. In most cats, this causes no symptoms or lasting harm.. However, in cats with pre-existing kidney compromise, this can be rapidly fatal. For this reason, the radiologist will carefully evaluate kidney status and discuss these risks with you before a final decision is made to proceed with treatment. The referring veterinarian should thoroughly discuss any known renal problems with the radiologist before referral. The radiologist together with your family veterinarian will plan the best course of action.

What we need from the referring veterinarian: The following information must be available to the radiologist before patients can be admitted for thyroid scan and therapy.

1. CBC, complete chemistry profile, T4, and urinalysis within 60 days.

2. All prior T4 test results.

3. Follow-up kidney function tests if pet was taking Tapazole.

4. Applicable prior health records, including radiographs, if any.

These tests can be performed by the Animal Radiology Clinic, if not previously done by the referring veterinarian, and treatment will be postponed until test results are available. In addition vaccination for

Rabies and the core feline diseases must be current within the last 3 years before admission (vaccinations are not available at our office). Our interaction with radioactive patients must be kept to a minimum. Therefore cats must be reasonably healthy, with all chronic conditions under control and acute conditions resolved; extensive nursing care will not be possible during their stay. All non-essential medications must be discontinued before hospitalization begins.

May I visit my cat in the Hospital? Unfortunately, no visitors are permitted in the radiology ward due to state law. You may phone as often as you like to check on your pet's condition. Please let us know if there is a special diet your pet prefers. We will do our best to provide it, or you may bring a supply from home. Please bring a one week supply of any medications and/or special food your cat is receiving.

How dangerous is the radiation to my family? Most of the radioactive material is eliminated through the urine, feces, saliva, sweat and oil glands. Prolonged close contact with your cat should be avoided for the first 2 1/2 weeks, and you will be given simple sanitation measures to follow. If these instructions are observed, then the hazard from the low level of radiation is very small, about the same as if you had a chest X-ray taken. Eventually, the animal will lose all of its radioactivity, and your cat can be handled normally once again. There is no danger to other pets in the household. Our goal is to deliver the lowest effective dose of I-131 to avoid unnecessary radiation exposure to humans and contamination to the environment.

Treatment Procedure

If you would like to have your cat treated with radioactive iodine, please first ask your family veterinarian to fax the appropriate records to us. Then call the receptionist at the Animal Radiology Clinic (972-267-3500) to make an appointment for initial evaluation. If your cat has other health problems, it is important that your family veterinarian provide information to the radiologist about the medical history, test results, and medications. The radiologist will examine your pet during the first visit to determine if any additional tests or medications are advisable before radioiodine treatment.

If you decide to proceed, we will then schedule a **2nd appointment,** (usually the following day) **to perform a thyroid scan**.. Any anti-thyroid medication should be discontinued for a minimum of 3-7 days before the scan. The thyroid scan confirms the presence of a treatable condition and helps determine the optimal dose of I-131 to be administered. The cat will ordinarily receive the radioactive iodine injection the same day as the scan or the next day. We will periodically measure the amount of radioactivity remaining in your pet and call you when it is safe to send the patient home. If no treatment is to be given, the cat can go home 6 hours after the scan, and no special precautions are needed. We recommend that your family veterinarian repeat the T4 test in 2 or 3 months after treatment for hyperthyroidism.