



Veterinary Specialist Group

RADIOACTIVE IODINE TREATMENT (I 131) INFORMATION

The Treatment

Radioactive iodine is used as a treatment for cats with overactivity of the thyroid gland, as an alternative to surgery or lifelong treatment with medication. It works by delivering a sufficient radiation dose to the overactive parts of the thyroid gland to stop the overactivity. This is given in the form of a subcutaneous (under the skin) injection.

Following the treatment, the radioactive iodine in the cat may deliver a low dose of radiation to anyone close by, and so some precautions are undertaken to minimise this effect. Most of these precautions are managed by our staff, which has the required resources and experience to safely manage the cats and their waste. This necessitates the cat being hospitalised at our clinic in a purpose built facility for the treatment for a period of seven days. Due to the radiation hazard following the treatment, you will not be able to visit your cat whilst it is here.

After care

For two weeks after the release of your cat from the hospital:

Avoid long periods (more than a few minutes) in close proximity to the cat, particularly for the first week. It is safe to pick up the cat for short periods but it should not sit on anyone's lap for extended periods or sleep next to them on a bed. Avoid "face to face" contact. Don't allow the cat to lick you. If possible wash your hands after handling it, especially before eating.

If the cat urinates inside a dwelling, the urine should be cleaned up thoroughly with paper towels, which are then placed in a rubbish bag. Use rubber gloves for this, and wash your hands thoroughly afterwards. If the urine has soaked into garments or carpets they should be washed thoroughly. Garments should be washed separately in a washing machine.

If the cat uses a "dirt box" keep this in an unoccupied area. Use a waterproof disposable liner (such as a plastic shopping bag) and wear gloves when cleaning it out.

Make sure the cat cannot jump onto the kitchen bench, or get onto anywhere that food is placed.

If you feel you would be unable to meet the aftercare requirements, it is possible to board the cat at the hospital during this time.

Should you have any queries or require any further information, please contact any of the nurses in the medicine department on 09 845 5455.