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## Radioiodine Treatment for Hyperthyroidism

Duration that cats are hospitalized: 3 to 5 days

Depends on dose of radiation administered

Based on symptoms, size of thyroid nodule and thyroid hormone level

ONLY stable cats in reasonable body condition are candidates for this treatment. Cats that are clinically ill or in poor condition should be treated medically until they are stable and in reasonable body condition.

Cost: \$900 - \$925 (includes appointment, hospitalization and treatment)

Treatment success: 90 – 95% with a single treatment (this is higher than surgery).

Follow up after treatment is generally done by the referring veterinarian.

Side effects:

1. A small percentage of cats (~6%) will become hypothyroid (low thyroid hormone level); however, not all of these cats will require thyroid supplementation. Most cats with low thyroid hormone (T4) levels following treatment do not show clinical symptoms of hypothyroidism and do not require thyroid supplementation.
2. Occasionally a cat will be dull for 1 or 2 weeks after treatment
3. **Possible unmasking of kidney disease:** Hyperthyroidism causes increased blood flow to the kidneys and can hide kidney disease. In older cats (greater than 11 years of age), cats with extremely high T4 levels, cats with slightly elevated kidney parameters on blood work, or cats with kidneys that palpate abnormally, a **tapazole trial** is generally recommended. Tapazole is given to the candidate for approximately 3 weeks. Bloodwork (chemistry profile and T4 level) are repeated. If kidney values do not increase significantly (compared with pre-Tapazole bloodwork) when the T4 is normal (or near normal), the cat is considered a good candidate for radioiodine treatment.

Radiation risk: Extremely small increase in probability for induction of cancer. If radiation safety precautions are followed (listed below), radiation exposure will be less than that for a single chest radiograph (for entire duration).

Radiation safety guidelines that must be followed for 3 weeks following release:

1. No pregnant women in the household.
2. Litter must be cleaned daily while wearing rubber gloves. The waste must be either disposed into the sewage system or sealed in a plastic bag, stored for 3 weeks, then placed in the trash.
3. Close contact with the cats should be minimized for 3 weeks following release from the hospital.
  - a. If there are children under 8 years of age, they should stay a least 6 feet away from the cat for 3 weeks.
  - b. Children over 8 years of age and adults should stay at least 3 feet away from the cat for 3 weeks, except for brief periods.
4. Hands should be washed thoroughly after cleaning the litter pan or handling the cat.

Cats that are treated with radioiodine will generally be hospitalized for 3-5 days until radioactive levels have subsided to a safe level for release.