



## RADIOACTIVE IODINE TREATED CATS DISCHARGE INFORMATION

Thank you for choosing our facility to treat your cat's hyperthyroidism with radioactive iodine. The treatment is very successful (>93%) and a non-painful, non-invasive way of treating your cat's condition.

The radioactive iodine comes in the form of a capsule which is administered orally to the cat. A light sedation is occasionally required to ensure the capsule is not bitten into before being swallowed. The capsule dissolves in the stomach and the radioactive iodine moves to the thyroid within a few hours. The iodine emits short acting beta waves and longer acting gamma waves, and is selectively up taken by the thyroid gland, so it only affects the active thyroid cells, and usually none of the surrounding tissue.

However, the cat is then emitting radiation that decays over time, which is why we must by law, keep the cat isolated with minimal contact, for 5 days post treatment.

Your cat is still emitting low-grade radiation when discharged after the treatment, including from their urine and faeces, so precautions should be taken to ensure that human exposure to the radiation is kept to a minimum.

Radiation is emitted from your treated cat, in all directions. An inverse square law applies to the strength of the radiation emitted from your cat. This means, as you move further away from your cat the amount of radiation you are exposed to, reduces. The best way to minimise the amount of radiation you and your family (including other pets) are exposed to, is by increasing distance from your cat and reducing the amount of time you spend very close to your cat.

**There is no requirement to keep other pets away from your treated cat. The risk from radiation hazards will be negligible to humans and other pets if the following precautions are taken. It is preferable to keep your cat inside or contained in a run for 2 weeks after treatment.**

### **For 2 weeks after the cat goes home from hospital: -**

1. Avoid holding the cat close to your body eg on your lap, for more than a few minutes at a time.
2. Keep the cat off benches or tables where food is prepared or eaten.
3. Keep cat away from any pregnant women or young children.
4. Urine, faeces and vomit from your treated cat, is considered liquid or solid radioactive waste, as the iodine is metabolised and excreted in the urine and faeces.

To dispose of this waste, use flushable litter and clean out the litter tray frequently scooping out the faeces and urine-soaked litter and flushing it down the toilet. Always use gloves and wash hands well after cleaning the tray.

Clean up any urine, faeces or vomit outside the litter tray with toilet paper, and flush down the toilet. Keep the litter tray in a reasonably unoccupied area.

If you are unable to use flushable litter, waste can be double bagged and kept in an outside area, away from you and the family, and disposed of as normal rubbish 6 weeks after the cat arrives home, when the radiation in the waste will have decayed away to environmental levels.

The blood levels of thyroid hormone usually take 3-6 to stabilise, but you will normally notice improvements in your cat within the first month after treatment. You are welcome to get a blood thyroid level (TT4) done to check the progress at 4-6 weeks post treatment if you are interested, but I recommend a follow up check plus full blood tests with your regular vet at **3- and 6-months post treatment**, to ensure the treatment is successful and the thyroid hormone is not persistently low as this can potentiate kidney disease, if not managed appropriately.

We hope the treatment is successful and your cat found the stay with us to be comfortable and not too stressful. If you require any further information on your cat's treatment, please contact me or call your regular veterinarian.

Dr. Amanda Gross BVSc

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