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## **McMaster & Heap Veterinary Practice Feline Radioactive Iodine (I-131) Treatment Client Information**

### **What is Radioactive Iodine? (Also known as I-131 treatment)**

I-131 is a radioactive form of Iodine.

It emits two types of radiation: Beta Particles and Gamma Particles.

Beta particles are the reason it is effective for hyperthyroidism treatment.

It is generally a very safe and effective treatment for cats, and has the advantage of being CURATIVE in approximately 95% of patients.

### **Points to be aware of Post I-131 treatment:**

In most cases, there are very little side effects to feline patients following I-131 treatment, however it is important to be aware of the very small percentage of possible health implications, some of which are listed below:

- Hyperthyroidism and CKD (Chronic Kidney Disease) are both common problems of the older cat, therefore, it is possible that they can occur concurrently in the same patient. Because hyperthyroidism increases the Kidneys filtration rate, excretion rate & renal blood flow, a patient could have a hidden/underlying kidney disease at the same time. This disease is only revealed once the patient's hyperthyroidism is controlled (reversibly) with medications, Or rapidly (and irreversibly) controlled by Radioactive Iodine treatment.

(\*it is important to note however, that the I-131 treatment is not the CAUSE of CKD, but has the possibility of "unmasking it\*\*).

- In other cases, very rarely, a patients' second thyroid gland becomes overactive at a later date, therefore causing the patient to become Hyperthyroid once more.
- A very small percentage of cats with a very large or over producing thyroid mass, will not have enough "normal" residual thyroid tissue left to maintain normal thyroid function after the "Abnormal" overactive tissue has been permanently destroyed by I-131 treatment. This could result in the patient becoming **Hypothyroid**.

### **How does I-131 Treatment Work?**

I-131 can only be administered in specially licensed facilities (hence why your cat may have also been referred to us by your usual veterinary clinic). Here at Mc Master & Heap, the Radioactive Iodine is administered to your cat as a single, "one off" subcutaneous injection (an injection under the skin) on the afternoon of admission to the clinic. This is done only by a veterinarian.

The Radioactive Iodine is then quickly absorbed into the cats blood stream & makes its way to the ACTIVE (abnormal) thyroid tissues in your cats body. The Radioactive material is NOT taken up in any other body tissues as the thyroid is the only area in the body to utilize iodine. Therefore, the treatment results in a selective accumulation of radioactive material in the abnormal tissues only. The radiation destroys the affected "abnormal" tissue, but does not damage the surrounding tissue or parathyroid glands. This process starts to take place within approximately the first 24hrs or so once the treatment has been administered.

### **What happens during boarding, after the treatment has been administered?**

After the Radioactive iodine has been administered, the patient is moved straight to our special isolation boarding facility on site, where they will be very well cared for by our qualified & trained nursing and veterinary staff for the next 7 days. Each patient has their own large cage (bedding, bowls & food supplied) and there are large windows in the room for natural light, allowing the cats to happily see outside!

During this isolation time patients are temporally radioactive. The large majority of excess radioactive material is excreted by the patient in the first 3 days following treatment-mainly in their urine/faeces & also small amounts in saliva. These stools & urine emit Beta particles which could become a hazard to a person if unknowingly ingested or inhaled. Because of this reason, only authorised staff can care for the patients & owners are not permitted to visit their cat during the 7-day period post treatment. For the same reason, any bedding/toys etc. brought in for the cat's stay will NOT be returned to the owner on discharge & will be discarded.

If the discharge instructions below are adhered to, the risk to owners from radiation will be negligible and should not be considered a reason for not having a cat treated.

### **CLIENT DISCHARGE GUIDELINES FOLLOWING I-131 TREATMENT**

**For the next TWO WEEKS after release of your cat it is very important you follow the instructions below & on the following page:**

- **Avoid long periods** (more than a few minutes) in close proximity to your cat, particularly during the first 2 weeks at home. It is safe to pick him/her up for short periods, but they should not sit on anyone's lap for extended periods or sleep next to you/anyone else in bed. This means you may have to close the bedroom door at night, if likely to usually sleep on your bed etc.
- Avoid "face-to-face" contact. Don't allow your cat to lick you. **Wash your hands after handling them and especially before eating.**
- **If your cat urinates/defecates inappropriately inside the household/dwelling**, it should be cleaned up with paper towels which are then placed in a rubbish bag. Spray with carpet cleaner/other & use rubber gloves for this. Wash your hands very 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 your cat uses a dirt box, keep this in an un-occupied area. Use a waterproof disposable litter tray lining to contain any waste easily. Place straight into a plastic rubbish bag outside.

**Wear rubber gloves when cleaning this out, and wash hands thoroughly afterwards.**

- If your cat “toilets outside” Please cover any veggie patches, and wash veggies thoroughly before preparing them for cooking/eating. Also wear gardening gloves if gardening for 2 weeks, and wash hands thoroughly once finished.
- **Make sure your cat cannot jump onto the kitchen bench/coffee table or anywhere that food is prepared/placed.** If likely to do so, try & keep him/her confined to other areas of the house & spray and wipe surface before using.
- **Ensure all people in the household are aware of these instructions.** If you have young children who are likely to forget/not understand these instructions, please keep your cat confined to an area so they do not have access to the cat for 2 weeks, or supervised interaction only during this time. Ensure litter trays are out of reach.
- It is OK for your cat to go outside & come in contact with any other pets you may have at home. However, it is still advisable to stop them from snuggling up with each other for long periods of time. (If your dog is likely to dig up cat faeces & ingest them, please try to ensure you prevent this from occurring for 2 weeks).

**\*\*\*Please ensure any Pregnant women do not have contact with your cat for at least 2 weeks\*\*\***

**BLOOD TESTING FOLLOWING TREATMENT:**

Your cat MUST have a REPEAT blood test in 1 month & 4 months FOLLOWING the date of treatment. This is required to ensure normal thyroid levels are now being maintained and kidney functions are stable. If you have been referred to us for treatment by another vet clinic, please arrange this blood test and any following general health checks with them over the phone, at your convenience.

**Any further questions regarding discharge information, please contact McMaster and Heap (03) 338 2534**

**General Client Information about Radioactive Iodine Treatment at Mc Master & Heap Veterinary Practice:**

- **The Full cost of the Radioactive Iodine treatment is \$1400.** This includes the radioactive Iodine treatment itself, as well as 7-day isolation boarding with qualified staff, food & bedding supply during the stay. Full Payment is required on day of discharge from clinic.
- Once an initial phone call and proposed date for your cats treatment has been arranged with you directly over the phone, our Vet Nurse Sarah Barker will contact the public hospital to request a supply of Radioactive Iodine treatment for your cat. If there are any issues with the supply of treatment from the hospital (very unlikely), our nurse will call you ASAP.
- Any patients currently on medication for the treatment of **Hyperthyroidism MUST STOP the medication 10-14 days prior to the date of I-131 treatment. - Our nurse will be in direct contact with you over the phone to discuss the precise date you must STOP giving him/her medication (if applicable.)**

**\*\*Please note: if you forget to stop giving you cat his/her medication on the discussed date, please let us know ASAP as we may need to alter the date he/she has treatment.\*\***

- You can offer food/water/litter tray to your cat at home in the morning before treatment.
- All bedding/bowls are supplied. (If you wish, you can bring a small bed/item. However, it will be discarded on day of discharge and will not be returned to you).
- All food is supplied for your cats stay - We generally offer Royal Canin Sensitivity “wet & dry” food, this is a chicken and rice-based diet that is easy on stomach. We also have a variety of “wet & dry” foods to choose from if we have a picky eater! (Royal Canin, Hills, Nutrience, Etc). However, if your cat is especially fussy and has a tenancy not to eat well in boarding situations, or is on a Prescription diet, please bring this food along with you, again any remaining food at the end of your cats’ stay cannot be returned to you as it has been in the radioactive iodine treatment room so don’t bring too much food!
- General patient admission on the date of treatment is between 8:00am-10:00am (unless told otherwise). Please check-in at the main reception desk when you arrive.
- Note: If you cannot drop your cat in on that day, we can arrange for you to drop him/her off the day/night before-but please let us know if you require this service in advance.
- You cannot visit your cat during his/her stay, but if you are wondering how he/she is, feel free to give us a call for an update!!

**• Pick up/discharge of your cat will be FOLLOWING week, after treatment. Between 12:00pm-6:30pm.**

Note: we will not call you on the day of discharge, as we will expect you to arrive at your convenience. On your arrival, please check in at the reception desk, and we will go through all discharge information, before bringing out your furry friend!!

**\*\*\*\*\*If your Cat appears to become unwell or you have concerns about his/her health (lethargy, unusual vomiting, Sneezing or OTHER unusual/concerning behaviours) in the lead up to the treatment date: Please NOTIFY US IMMEDIATELY. If your cat is unwell ON ADMISSION we will NOT be able to administer the Radioactive Iodine Treatment (and charges may apply). Cats must also be up to date with vaccinations.\*\*\*\*\***

#### **McMASTER & HEAP VETERINARY CLINIC: CLIENT CONTACT INFORMATION**

• For any general information and booking enquiries, please call/email our Vet Nurse: Sarah

• For any Further Information, Questions or Concerns Please speak DIRECTLY to our Veterinarians: Dr Steve Heap, (or if unavailable, Dr Kirsty Thompson).

**Phone:** Mc Master & Heap Vets Reception: (03) 338 2534

**Email:** [reception@mcmasterandheap.co.nz](mailto:reception@mcmasterandheap.co.nz)

Written by Megan C- VN, Updated June 2022 by Amanda M -DVN.