



Oregon Veterinary Specialty Hospital

Feline Hyperthyroid Clinic

Dr. Diane Decker

9339 SW Beaverton Hillsdale Hwy, Portland, OR 97225

Email: I-131Records@nva.com (preferred)

Tel: 503-292-3001

Our love for our feline patients and our passion for curing hyperthyroidism will drive and be evident in all of our actions including our * patient handling, housing and treatment, * care and reassurance we provide to the people who love them, and* support of primary care providers.

Thank you for contacting us. We are excited to offer the opportunity to cure your cat's hyperthyroidism with radioactive iodine therapy, also known as I-131. While there is no place like home, our goal is to make your pet's stay with us as stress free as possible both for the cat and their family. This packet will guide you through the process and answer important questions.

Diane Decker, DVM Program Director, Radiation Safety Officer
Office Hours 8am-6pm Monday, Tuesday and Thursday

Mindy Kisling, CVT

Meadow Spencer, CVT

We're a Referral Only Service

In order to maintain professional courtesy, we ask that you continue to see your regular veterinarian for follow up screening bloodwork/exams and for any urgent care services your pet may need prior to or after radioactive iodine treatment.

Unless directly related to the management or treatment of your cat's hyperthyroidism or at the request or approval from your regular veterinarian, **we are unable to provide recommendations or treatments for new or pre-existing conditions and encourage you to seek their advice.**

If you are happy with our services and have had a positive experience please let your regular veterinarian know.



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COST: It's important to be aware that the total cost of this advanced medical procedure entails more than the injection and hospital stay itself

- Phone consult: **\$170**
- Pre-radioiodine testing: if all pre-treatment tests and procedures are done at our clinic (not all are required), these could cost *up to ~\$1450 above the injection cost.*
- Radioiodine injection and hospitalization: **\$1400**
- Post-radioiodine testing at your vet. At least 3 visits with labwork and exam. The cost is determined by your veterinarian's pricing structure.

The Referral Process

The process entails 5 parts. PLEASE READ THIS SECTION where we will outline the recommendations and requirements for this program.

Part 1: **Review this packet** (especially "The Referral Process" and "FAQ"). After you've read the packet and know that you would like to proceed, please respond to our email questionnaire.

Part 2: A phone consultation with Dr. Decker

- This is a 30 – 40 minute conversation with Dr. Decker. She will have thoroughly reviewed your cat's hyperthyroid history. She will discuss hyperthyroidism, radioiodine, the suitability of this treatment for your pet, pre I-131 testing, and scheduling. The goal is that we all feel comfortable that I-131 is the right treatment right now and that your questions are answered. The staff will then talk to you for 15-20 minutes to answer any aftercare questions and to learn how to make your cat's visits with us as positive as possible.

COST: \$170

Part 3: Meet and Greet Appointment

- This is a chance for us to meet your cat, answer any remaining questions, and perform the pre I-131 diagnostics. Examining our patients prior to the injection date helps to ward off any surprises where we may have to cancel the injection. There is a \$300 cost in the rare instance of an unused pre-ordered dose. *We can be flexible based on driving distance and your cat's personality.*
 - **COST: ~\$1450** if all testing and treatments are complete here. *Note: not all are required.*
- **Why do we recommend pre-radioiodine testing?** We say "We treat cats not thyroid glands". We want to do our best to have the happiest, healthiest patients with the best longevity after radioiodine. Studies show that *up to 20%* of hyperthyroid cats have a non-kidney illness in addition to hyperthyroidism. It is important that we take steps to evaluate your cat's overall health to answer these very important questions: Is there another disease process that * could make your pet feel ill while in isolation after the injection or shortly after returning home? * needs our attention BEFORE I-131 therapy? * would change your mind about pursuing I-131 therapy?



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- NOTE: Your regular veterinarian can perform some of these tests. However, it is important that we coordinate as we have specific needs for lab work and timing.
- We are sensitive to the additional cost of pre- and post I-131 diagnostics and respect your wishes for which tests you choose to undertake. With our > 95% cure rate there is a great financial benefit to I-131 even with these additional costs. You will be sent an individualized treatment after your phone consult.
- Listed below are the required and recommended testing.
 - **Exam** – *required* by state law
 - **Bloodwork** at a reference lab– type and timing of bloodwork determined by Dr. Decker. Bloodwork is *required* to be done within 30 - 60 days of the injection (varies with kidney disease, anemia, etc). The meet and greet is usually a good time for pre I-131 testing.
 - **Radiographs (X-Rays)** – radiographs are *highly recommended* for all patients.
Why - This provides an overall image of your cat's thorax and abdomen. No test can test for 100% of diseases but good x-ray results are great news. If x-rays are declined, we will ask you to sign an Against Medical Advice Form.
 - **Echocardiogram** – an echocardiogram is *highly recommended* for all patients.
Why - The heart can be damaged by hyperthyroidism. Our stethoscope and even x-rays are not detailed enough to give full information. Echocardiogram is the gold standard test to evaluate the feline heart. It is important to know if your cat has heart disease and if it needs to be stabilized prior to I-131 therapy and isolation. This can be done at the meet and greet to minimize visits.
 - **Blood pressure** – blood pressure is *recommended* for all patients.
Why - Hypertension is common in hyperthyroid cats. If your cat's blood pressure is repeatedly HIGH we will recommend blood pressure medication.
 - **Gabapentin** – mild anti-anxiety and sedative. *Required* unless your cat has a reaction.
Why - This medication reduces stress on the heart, which is very important for hyperthyroid patients. It also helps reduce anxiety of car ride, helps patients hold still for the injection as well as settling into their kennel.
 - **Nail trim** – we *require* that your cat's nails are trimmed SHORT prior to I-131 therapy. There can't be any "hooks" on the nail tips that could get caught in bedding. If a nail trim is declined at the meet and greet and if the nails are too long on injection day, there will be a \$50 nail trim charge.
Why – for staff and patient safety.
 - **Flea prevention** – we *require* that your cat have a flea prevention within 30 days.
Why – Any of our patients could inadvertently introduce fleas into the treatment area. We have to take steps to avoid radioactive parasites. If your cat hasn't had flea prevention, we find fleas or flea dirt, we will administer flea medication (additional cost)
 - **Sanitary Shave** – *required* for medium- to long-haired cats and some "plush" short-haired cats, especially if any history of diarrhea or urinary accidents.
Why – Staff and owner safety. After the I-131 injection the patient's urine, fecal matter, drool and vomit are radioactive. If your cat were to get fecal matter or litter stuck in the fur, it can be difficult to clean them fully.



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Part 4: **Radioiodine and post-injection hospital stay**

You will drop off at a pre-set time on Monday morning for the radioiodine. Discharge appointments are scheduled on the injection day when you are called in the late afternoon with an update on your cat.

Standard Stay (4 days long, 72 hours): Stay is determined by the Oregon Health Authority. You will pick your cat up on Thursday afternoon after Monday injection. (normally between 12:30-2pm).

NOTE: After your cat goes home there will be limited contact and litter management you will need do for an additional 7 days

- **COST:** ~\$1400

Part 5: **Medical aftercare and follow-up appointments** with your regular veterinarian

Your pet will need to be rechecked by your regular veterinarian at the 1 month, 3 month, and 6 month post I-131 therapy, SOONER IF CONCERNS.

- We cannot overstate how critical these appointments are. We are tracking kidney and thyroid values as well as clinical response. We need to find and address any concerning changes ASAP. NOTE: Dr. Decker may adjust these recommendations on an individual basis.
- If the recommendations for these appointments are not followed, re-treatment at 50% reduced cost may not be available.
- These appointments should include a doctor exam, lab work (cbc, chemistry including SDMA if available, TT4, and urine) AT A REFERENCE LABORATORY and blood pressure.
- **COST:** at least 3 visits, *cannot be estimated due to each individual clinic's different pricing.*



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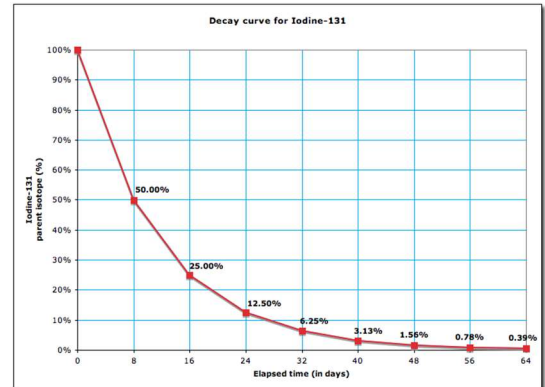
Frequently Asked Questions

We take our role as your and your vet's partner in your cat's health seriously. It is important to us that you feel comfortable with the process. Please let us know if you have further questions.

Q: Will my cat be radioactive when they come home?

A: Yes. The highest radioactivity occurs here in our clinic. Patients continue to emit logarithmically (very rapidly) decreasing levels of radiation after being released.

Due to I-131's short ½ life (3 days in the cat's body, 8 days outside of the body), special handling protocols are only in effect for **7 days** after discharge unless an owner is pregnant or there are children in the house (litter avoidance, contact time).



Q: How much radiation will I actually be exposed to?

A: It is important to follow the aftercare guidelines. When you follow these guidelines, the amount of radiation you will be exposed to is equivalent to that of a roundtrip, cross country flight.

Q: I have a serious health condition, should I be worried about the radiation exposure?

A: We are unfortunately unable to answer this question for you and encourage you to speak with your healthcare provider about this topic if you have concerns. We are happy to provide you with information about our process and aftercare recommendations for you to share with your healthcare provider.

Q: What are the side effects of radioiodine therapy?

A: The word "radioactive" is often associated with side effects from radiation therapy that human patients experience. Fortunately, this does NOT apply to radioactive iodine treatment. I-131 is a targeted treatment that affects ONLY abnormal thyroid tissue. Because of this, it's about as risk free to the patient as a treatment can be!

Q: What if my pet gets ill during their hospital stay? Can you treat them?

A: YES! We will do anything we can to help your pet within the bounds of our facility. Treating a radioactive patient is more involved and expensive. We are also not as likely to have the same success as a traditional hospital stay because of our contact exposure limits. This is why we recommend testing PRIOR to I-131 in order to find and treat underlying conditions. Cats tend to hide illness from strangers so objective information from testing helps us help your cat. It's also important to understand that we do not offer overnight care and that transfer may not be possible depending on your cat's level of radioactivity.

Q: What if my cat isn't in the 95% first injection cure rate?

A: It is important to remember that only 80% of cats are at their normal and final thyroid value at the one month recheck while 95% are there by 6 months. Dr. Decker will work with your regular veterinarian to determine the best plan for your cat. We tend to be patient and let the thyroid normalize as long as your cat is doing well clinically, kidney values are stable, and the values are trending appropriately (e.g. thyroid value has decreased by at least 50%.)

The less than 5% failure rate encompasses both cats that 1. **remain hyperthyroid** (one re-treatment offered at **50% of original price** if related to initial nodule. NOTE: recommended post I-131 follow up appointments must be adhered to for this reduce price) and 2. those cats who may develop **persistent low thyroid** (hypothyroidism) and will require daily hormone supplementation.



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Q: My cat is nervous when away from home. Can I come visit them?

A: We are unable to have visitation during the time your cat is in the I-131 isolation or extended stay wards. We assure you our caring staff make every effort to give your cat a comfortable stay. We say these kitties get as much love as a radioactive cat can get!

Q: What separation is needed from my other pets and my family members?

A: It is not necessary to keep your treated cat locked away in their own room or separated from other pets. (this may vary state by state when researching other websites). There may be individual circumstances where this works best in your home but it is not required. If you do not separate your cats then all waste in the communal boxes must be treated as contaminated and waste management protocols followed.

There are, however, limits on how much time people can spend with the treated pet. Adults must limit close contact (within 1 ft.) to 30 minutes and children for 10 minutes per day for the first 7 days at home. Pregnant women and children should limit their contact with the cat and litter for 2 weeks..

Q: What are the benefits of radioiodine over methimazole medication or y/d diet?

A: While we prefer a methimazole or y/d prescription diet trial for most patients, radioiodine is the perfect long-term treatment for virtually every patient for many reasons but especially:

1. **Longevity.** Cats with hyperthyroidism that are treated with radioiodine live over 3.5 years longer than cats that are treated with methimazole alone in studies. **Radioiodine cures the disease** and ablates (removes) the abnormal nodule where methimazole and y/d diet allow the nodule to keep growing. This leads to more uncontrolled hyperthyroidism throughout the years, which can damage heart and kidneys. The nodule has the potential to grow beyond where medicine or radioiodine can control the hyperthyroidism. Even more concerning is conversion into a cancerous tumor. This may require very high I-131 doses at a special university facility.
2. **Financial.** Radioiodine has the additional benefit of potentially costing the owners up to thousands of dollars less than medical management (i.e. methimazole or y/d therapy) of hyperthyroidism over their cat's lifetime. Medication and food, exams and lab work costs \$700-\$1000 a year depending on the fee structure of your veterinarian. Six years of medical or prescription diet management costs about \$5000-\$6000. Radioiodine therapy + consult costs ~\$1700 - \$3000 depending on length of stay and pre-I-131 diagnostics chosen at our facility. *Pre- and post-testing at your veterinarian are not included in the cost estimate.*
3. **Human-animal bond.** Some cats do not take medications easily, which can alter their bond with their family. With our 95% cure rate we love that more cats get to spend more time just being loved instead of medicated.