

Where will my cat be staying while in the hospital?



## Associated Veterinary Specialists

12462 Natural Bridge Road, Suite G

Bridgeton, Missouri 63044

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Phone: 314.739.1510

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Fax: 314.291.2116

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[contactavs@avsstl.com](mailto:contactavs@avsstl.com)

# Radioactive Iodine Treatment

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# What is hyperthyroidism?

Hyperthyroidism is a disease that is caused by a tumor of the thyroid gland that leads to an overproduction of thyroid hormone. In most cats this is a benign tumor, but in rare cases it can be malignant. The excess thyroid hormone causes an overactive metabolism that can put stress on the heart, digestive tract and many other organs in the body.

The most common clinical signs seen include the following: weight loss despite a normal or increased appetite, increased thirst and urination, defecation outside of the litterbox, increased vocalization & restlessness, vomiting and/or diarrhea, and unkempt fur.

## Treatments available for hyperthyroidism

### Medical and Dietary Therapy

PROS: Inexpensive short-term and easily available

CONS: Not curative, there are potential side effects and monitoring is required with therapy

### Surgery

In areas where radioactive iodine therapy is available, surgery is not recommended for the treatment of hyperthyroidism

### Radioactive Iodine

PROS: Curative

CONS: Has to be performed at specialized facility and expensive short-term

## RADIOACTIVE IODINE

This treatment consists of administering a small dose of radioactive iodine which targets and is absorbed by the overactive thyroid gland. The radiation affects a very small area to destroy abnormal cells. This is the gold standard of care in cats and in humans.

This procedure can be curative and there is no risk of a drug reaction. Since there are specific isolation protocols that need to be followed there are only a few referral hospitals that provide this specialized treatment.

## Other considerations

Since hyperthyroidism and kidney disease are common problems in older cats, it is estimated that 30-55% of all hyperthyroid cats have some level of kidney disease. The increased metabolic rate of the hyperthyroid patient can make the kidneys look better 'on paper'. The underlying kidney disease is masked by the hyperthyroidism but it is critical to understand that treating a cat for hyperthyroidism does not actually cause kidney disease.

In rare cases, a cat may not respond to the radioactive iodine therapy. If this occurs, we recommend referral to the University of Missouri for further diagnostics since there is a higher concern for malignancy.

Uncommonly a cat may be too sensitive to the radioactive iodine and develop hypothyroidism. If your pet develops hypothyroidism it can be managed with hormone supplements.

## AT HOME CARE

For two weeks following the radioactive iodine injection, several restrictions will need to be followed. A few of these restrictions include the following:

-Reduce your contact with your cat to brief episodes of time

-Do not sleep with your cat  
-Use litterbox liners and throw away the litter with your regular trash

-Wash your hands after petting, feeding or cleaning the litterbox

-Your cat can have normal interaction with the other pets in your house

## Cost of treatment

The average cost of radioactive iodine therapy is between \$1500-1700. Please contact AVS to inquire about the current cost of treatment. An initial consultation is always scheduled prior to radioactive iodine therapy.

Hospitalization and the 2-week post treatment Geiger check are included in the cost of treatment.

Reference: American Veterinary Medical Association

