



Radio Iodine Cat Centre



At the Bishopton Radio Iodine Cat Centre our expert vets provide the best treatment for your cat with hyperthyroidism. Since opening our treatment centre in 2008 we have treated over 500 cats with radio iodine therapy.

- The Radio Iodine Cat Centre is located within our RCVS accredited Small Animal Hospital.
- Certified ISFM Cat Friendly Clinic.
- The centre is run by vets with advanced feline qualifications.
- Dedicated clinical team on-site 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

What is hyperthyroidism?

Hyperthyroidism is the most common hormonal disorder found in older cats. It is usually caused by a benign tumour of the thyroid gland, which releases excessive thyroid hormone. This can cause many symptoms including excessive hunger, weight loss, poor coat condition, vomiting, an increased heart rate and a swelling in the neck (goitre). If the condition is not treated, the cat can become severely underweight and develop secondary problems such as heart disease. If your vet suspects your cat is hyperthyroid, the diagnosis is usually confirmed by means of a blood test.

Treating hyperthyroidism

There are five main treatment options available: radio iodine treatment or surgery to cure; or daily oral medication, gel, or prescription diet as life-long treatment.



1. Radio iodine treatment

A single injection of radio-active iodine is given into the scruff. This is taken up by the thyroid gland and selectively destroys the abnormal tissue. This treatment is generally seen as the gold standard treatment of hyperthyroidism.

Advantages

- Single treatment is curative in approximately 95% of cases.
- No general anaesthetic is needed, although mild reversible sedation is used.
- All affected tissue is treated wherever it is located.
- Very few side-effects.
- Depending on the length of treatment this can work out more economical than long-term medication or diet.

Disadvantages

- Patients must remain hospitalised until radiation levels have dropped sufficiently – usually 1-2 weeks.
- In a small number of cases it can take up to six months for the full effect to be seen (effective in most cases within two weeks).
- Kidney disease can be unmasked if already present (as with all treatment options).
- A small number of patients require a second injection.

2. Surgery

Surgical removal of the thyroid glands can cure hyperthyroidism. To minimise risks, a period of stabilisation with medication or dietary control prior to surgery is advised.

Advantages

- Curative if all affected tissue is removed.
- Rapidly effective.
- Short period of hospitalisation.
- Widely available procedure.

Disadvantages

- Requires a general anaesthetic.
- Risk of damage to the adjacent parathyroid gland, which can result in low blood calcium levels and the requirement for short to long-term medication.
- In order to reduce the risk of calcium problems often only one of the two glands is removed. However, in 70% of the cases the remaining gland is affected and in these cases the condition recurs, requiring additional treatment months to years later.
- Only suitable when all affected tissue is accessible (up to 20% of affected cats have inaccessible tissue in their chest).





3. Oral medication

Daily administration of tablets or liquid medication control the condition by preventing over-production of the thyroid hormone.

Advantages

- Most cats are stabilised in under four weeks.
- Anaesthesia and hospitalisation are not required.
- The initial cost is lower than surgery or radio iodine.

Disadvantages

- The condition is controlled, not cured, therefore lifelong treatment is required.
- Some cats are difficult to give medication to, resulting in poor control.
- Regular blood tests are necessary for monitoring.
- Side effects occur in approximately 20% of cats, including skin irritation, liver changes, vomiting, suppression of white blood cells and anaemia.
- The condition usually worsens over time, requiring dose increases.
- Pregnant women must take precautions when handling medication.

4. Gel

A gel version of the oral medication is available which is applied to the hairless side of the ear.

Advantages

- As per oral medication.
- Easier than tableting in some cats.
- Reduced risk of vomiting compared to tablets (other side effects are the same).

Disadvantages

- Not licenced in the UK.
- As per oral medication.
- Less reliable dosing compared to tablets.
- Can irritate skin where it is applied.
- Care must be taken to avoid absorption through human skin.

5. Diet

Hills y/d is a prescription diet with low iodine content. Iodine is essential for the production of thyroid hormone, so restriction prevents excess hormone production.

Advantages

- No requirements for anaesthetic or hospitalisation.
- Easier to administer than tablets.
- Initial cost lower than surgery or radio iodine.

Disadvantages

- The condition is controlled, not cured, therefore lifelong treatment is required.
- To be effective it must be fed as the sole diet; any alternative food or water could contain enough iodine to render the treatment ineffective.
- Certain medications/supplements contain iodine and therefore prevent the treatment working.
- Some cats may not find it to their taste.
- Takes up to 12 weeks to take effect.

Treatment at Bishopton Radio Iodine Cat Centre

The referral process

After your vet has referred you to us, we work in partnership with you and your local practice to ensure your cat will receive the highest standard of care.

Your vet will ensure the treatment will be suitable for your cat by undertaking a period of stabilisation on medication or diet, followed by urine and blood tests. Further tests may be necessary if additional illnesses are identified.

One of our vets will telephone to discuss the whole process, ensuring you are confident that the treatment is right for your cat, before the appointment is booked.

Any hyperthyroid medication your cat is taking must be stopped 10 days before iodine administration.

Hills y/d diet must be stopped 14 days before treatment. We advise that your cat is fully vaccinated prior to admission. Please also administer flea and worm treatments the week before treatment.

On the day

Please starve your cat from 11.30pm the night before your appointment. Take away any drinking water from 8.00am on the morning of the appointment.

Should you wish, Zylkene, a natural anti-stress supplement, can be used throughout the process and Feliway can be used to help relax your cat during the journey. Further tips for travelling with your cat can be found on International Cat Care's website.

You will have an admission appointment with one of our vets, who will examine your cat and answer any questions you may have. A light sedation will be administered and the radio iodine injection given. The sedation will then be reversed within a few minutes.

Making your cat feel at home will help them settle, so we would encourage you to bring one of their favourite blankets or toys for their stay, although unfortunately this cannot be returned. They should also have special dietary food or medication brought for their stay. We provide several standard cat foods.

If you require transport to or from Bishopton Radio Iodine Cat Centre we can put you in touch with a pet ambulance who can collect your cat from your house.

In-patient care

After treatment, your cat will stay with us usually 7 to 9 days as an in-patient to fully recover and allow radiation levels to decrease. They will receive round the clock care from our dedicated and experienced team. The accommodation has recently been expanded and enriched for each patient.

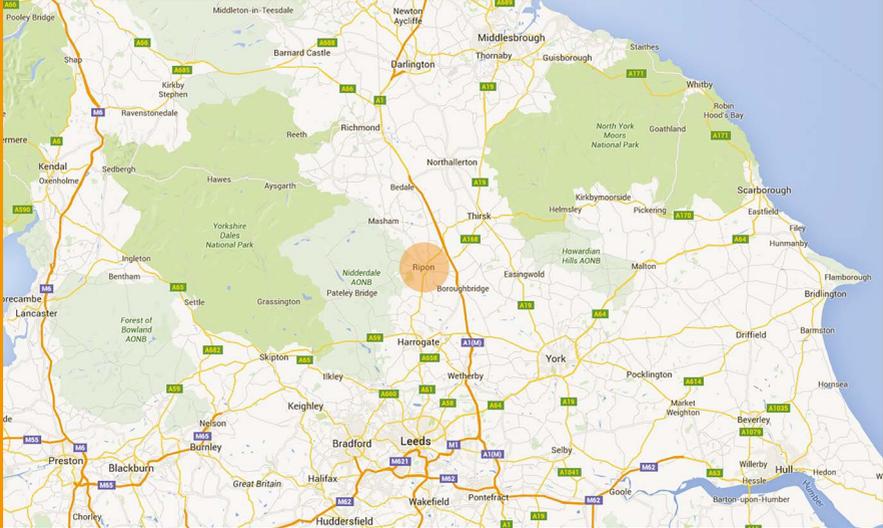
We will update you regularly while your cat is with us, so you can see how they are progressing in our care.

How to care for your cat after radio iodine treatment

After treatment, it takes up to six weeks for radiation levels to return to normal. The risk to you and your family is minimal, provided you follow the advice strictly until four weeks post treatment, ideally six weeks.

- On the journey home your cat should be kept as far away from you as possible, for instance placing the basket in the boot. Please do not bring children with you. If you may be pregnant please arrange for someone else to collect your cat.
- Avoid periods of more than a few minutes in close proximity to your cat. This includes having your cat sit on your lap. It is safe to pick them up for short periods, but avoid face-to-face contact and do not allow your cat to lick you. Wash your hands after handling them. Your cat should not sleep in the same room as any family member.
- Ensure your cat cannot jump onto kitchen surfaces or anywhere where food may be prepared or consumed. Clean the surface thoroughly before use if contact does occur.
- Keep your cat indoors.
- A litter tray should be provided, using flushable litter that we will supply. You must wear gloves when cleaning it out. If your home is connected to a public sewer, the dirty litter should be scooped into the toilet and flushed away. If your house has a septic tank, dirty litter should be scooped into a rubbish bag that should be kept in a secure container away from the house for eight weeks, before disposing via council rubbish collection.
- If your cat urinates or defecates outside the litter tray, the mess should be cleaned with a paper roll and disinfectant and flushed down the toilet. You must wear gloves whilst cleaning up.
- Moulting hairs are not radioactive unless they have become contaminated with urine or faeces. Your cat will not leave any radiation where they have been lying, assuming no bodily fluids are left.
- The above information applies only to humans. Your cat can associate with any other animals as normal.
- If you feel it would be difficult to follow this advice we can arrange for your cat to stay in with us for a longer period.





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