



Thyroid Scintigraphy

Nuclear scintigraphy (also known as nuclear medicine) is the imaging specialty that involves the use of radioactive isotopes in the diagnosis and treatment of disease.

In nuclear medicine, a radioisotope is introduced into the body. The isotope is then taken up in different amounts by different organs. A diagnosis is made in nuclear medicine by imaging the distribution of the radioactive element within the body.

The radiation emitted from the radioisotope is detected by a scintillation counter (this is why nuclear medicine is referred to as nuclear scintigraphy) and an image of the radioactivity is produced.

A thyroid scan is a quick, painless nuclear medicine procedure that allows us to visualize the thyroid gland with the use of a radioisotope tracer. In most cases, we do not need to use any sedation and the procedure is completed in less than an hour. The thyroid scan is a vital step in our feline radioiodine therapy program and can be used to help your veterinarian diagnose early hyperthyroidism. It should be noted that in diagnostic nuclear medicine, the radiation doses are low and your pet will not feel any untoward effects from their nuclear medicine procedure.

Most of our patients will be released the same day as their procedure, but some may require overnight hospitalization. We cannot release your pet to you immediately after their procedure because we need to allow the radioactivity to decay before they are released from the hospital.

When you return to pick up your pet, you will be given preliminary findings from the study. One of our technicians will discuss the images from the thyroid scan with you and one of our doctors will contact your veterinarian. A written report and the images from the study will also be sent your veterinarian.