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The “Pearls” of I-131 Therapy- **The Treatment Week**

Once you have completed all of the pre-treatment requirements, we can set up your I-131 treatment appointment.

How to prepare for your cat’s stay:

- **Hyperthyroid medication:**
 - If your cat is currently on hyperthyroid medication (methimazole), the last dose of medication should be given on the Friday night prior to your Monday morning appointment
 - If your cat has started and stopped the hyperthyroid medication, it must not be given for at least 2 weeks prior to the I-131 appointment
 - If your cat is on Y/D, use the week prior to her I-131 treatment to gradually change to the new diet she will be receiving after treatment. If you are unsure of which diet this should be, please discuss with your family veterinarian.
- **What to bring:**
 - Any medications (other than the hyperthyroid medication), your cat is currently receiving
 - One week’s worth of food – this can be dry and/or wet food
 - You may bring a small fabric item (small bed, blanket, towel, t-shirt) that will stay with your cat during their stay. If the item is too large, we may need to cut it to fit our requirements. Please be aware that you will not be able to get this item back.
- On the Sunday night before your cat’s appointment, your cat should eat dinner, but do not feed him/her after midnight. Free access to water is ok and encouraged.

What happens during your cat’s stay:

- As soon as you arrive, your cat will be brought to the treatment area to receive a physical exam and to start his/her procedures.
- After you are checked in, you will be able to meet with the VICSD Staff Veterinarian to discuss any last minute questions or concerns.

- First, your cat will receive a thyroid scan, which is the most accurate way of determining how hyperthyroid he or she is. The thyroid scan consists of injecting a rapidly decaying radioactive substance into his or her vein that will highlight the active thyroid tissue. We use a special camera called a gamma camera, to measure this activity. Some cats require sedation for the thyroid scan as they need to lie perfectly still for about two minutes while we hold them.
- Based off the results of the thyroid scan, we order either a low or a high dose of I-131. This will be administered via a relatively quick and painless injection under the skin Monday afternoon.
 - The potential results from the thyroid scan are:
 - Normal (not hyperthyroid)
 - Small benign growth in one or both thyroid glands requiring a low dose of I-131
 - Large benign growth in one or both thyroid glands requiring a high dose of I-131
 - Very large benign growth in one or both thyroid glands. This only happens in a very low percentage of cats, but may require two separate I-131 treatments.
 - The last option is very rare, but is a malignant (cancerous) growth in one or both thyroid glands, that often requires two I-131 treatments and carries a poorer prognosis.
- Once your cat is injected with I-131, he or she will be placed in our cat ward to stay for the week. Your pet should go home Friday if given the low dose of radiation, or on Saturday if given the high dose.
- We encourage you to visit our website to use our Catcam (webcam) to monitor your cat during their stay. You may also visit during business hours through the window in our lobby.

How to care for your cat after I-131 treatment:

- For your safety, there is a two week limited contact time as soon as your cat comes home after treatment. During this time, we recommend that you keep an 8 foot distance from your cat at all times except for 30 minutes a day (30 minutes per person, which can be distributed throughout the day). This also includes not allowing your cat to sleep with you at night. It is best to keep him or her in an unoccupied room. The limited contact time does not apply to any other adult pets in the house.
- We recommend using a liner for the litter box, and disposing of the liner (including the litter) once a day into a garbage can outside, as the body rids of radiation primarily via the urine.

- Anyone under the age of 18 or pregnant women should not change the litter box or come within an 8 foot distance of your cat.
- Your cat will need to remain indoors during this time as well.
- Once the two weeks is up, everything goes back to normal.
- We require labwork (including kidney values, thyroid level, and urine concentration) at the 1 month, 3 months, 6 months, and 12 months mark post I-131 treatment. This will allow for monitoring for any changes to the thyroid or kidney function so that they can be cared for as soon as possible.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact VICSD.

We look forward to meeting you and your cat!

Sincerely,
Seth Wallack, DVM, DACVR
VICSD CEO