

Advantages and Disadvantages of Feline Hyperthyroidism Treatments

TREATMENT

ADVANTAGES

DISADVANTAGES

Radioactive Iodine

- Kills abnormal cells in any location
- Cure rate $\geq 95\%$; most successful treatment for carcinoma
- Relapse rate 5%
- Simple treatment – one injection or oral capsule
- Serious side effects are rare
- Limited testing needed after successful treatment
- Minimal risk of permanent hypothyroidism
- Preferred treatment for humans

- Requires special license and facility
- Hospitalization varies from 3 days to 4 weeks depending on dose cat receives and regional regulations
- Owner cannot visit
- Cat is under 'house arrest' for 2 weeks after discharge
- Owner must collect wastes for 2 weeks after discharge
- Owner cannot cuddle cat for long intervals for 2 weeks after discharge
- Not reversible

Oral or Transdermal Medication

- Response rate $\geq 95\%$ while on medication
- Small pills, liquid or topical gel
- Requires no hospitalization
- No risk of permanent hypothyroidism
- Reversible if kidney function declines

- Relapse rate 100% when off medication
- Daily medication (usually twice daily) for the rest of the cat's life
- Frequent lab tests to monitor effectiveness and safety
- Drug reactions occur in up to 25% of cats; facial itching, vomiting, liver failure, abnormal blood cell levels and bleeding episodes may occur
- Tumor continues to grow and may become malignant

Surgical Thyroidectomy

- $\geq 90\%$ cure rate if both glands are removed
- 35–60% cure rate if one gland is removed
- Cures disease within 1–2 days
- Relapse rate 5% if bilateral procedure; $\leq 30\%$ if unilateral
- Requires no special equipment
- Most general surgeons can perform

- General anesthesia in a cat with a compromised cardiovascular system is risky
- May damage parathyroid gland and cause a transient or permanent calcium crisis
- Requires hospitalization
- Not reversible
- Most cats require stabilization first with medication
- Voice or purr may change

Dietary Therapy

- Only a change in diet is required
- Response rate $\geq 82\%$ while on diet
- Safe in cats with renal insufficiency

- Absolutely the only food the cat can eat for the rest of its life
- Only low-iodine treats and water can be used
- Relapse rate 100% when off diet