



Sven, now fully recovered following his RI

A Rescue Cat is First Radio Iodine Patient

A rescue cat has gained a new lease of life thanks to a cutting edge treatment – the first in the North West

Sven – a seven year-old rescue cat from Mold – is the first cat to benefit from the latest cutting edge radio iodine treatment at a recently opened facility at ChesterGates Veterinary Specialists in Chester – the first centre of its kind in the North West of the country to provide the latest gold standard treatment for feline hyperthyroidism.

With very few facilities in the UK available for the treatment, the new centre will provide a lifeline for local cat owners.

A large number of cats suffer

from over-active thyroid issues, in particular older cats. Hyperthyroidism occurs when the cat's thyroid gland produces too much thyroid hormone and can cause weight loss, despite an increased appetite, increased thirst, and sometimes vomiting and diarrhoea and increased activity levels.

Although the condition can be helped by medication or a prescription diet, these treatments require regular ongoing monitoring which can be invasive, time consuming and stressful for the cat.

In Sven's case, his owner, Callum

Sayers, had been medicating his cat with liquid medication twice a day and found the treatment was causing anxiety in his cat who dreaded the medication process.

As a result, the Sayers' family decided radio iodine treatment, which provides a cure for the condition, was the best course of action.

Mr Sayers commented: "Sven was diagnosed with hyperthyroidism last year and has been on oral medication since then. Although he responded to this, the regular application of the medicine caused considerable



Sven with Esmee Sayers

▲ anxiety in Sven and resulted in him always being a bit nervous around us.”

Veterinary surgeon, Ellie Mardell, said: “When Sven presented to me, I was a little concerned that his history of sensitive stomach could cause him problems in the future, so I recommended blood tests and ultrasound to investigate this further.

“Low vitamin B12 was found, suspected due to inflammatory bowel disease, and vitamin B12 is now being supplemented by injection. Nothing was seen on the abdominal ultrasound to indicate severe disease and make us concerned that Sven would have problems during hospitalisation for RI treatment.

“However, his thyroid was really enormous, large both sides of the neck but really huge on the right. It felt mobile and smooth, so probably benign, but, the size of it, and the fact that it was probably cystic, plus the high dose of medication that had been required to control the thyroid hormone levels, all made Sven a more tricky candidate for treatment as higher doses of RI are needed for thyroids like these to avoid treatment failure, and this means that there could also be a risk of hypothyroidism if there is too great a

response. However, we were also keen for Sven to have RI treatment as a cure is particularly important when there is a large cystic thyroid, as long term tablet treatment is unlikely to achieve good control and there is an increased risk of these large cystic thyroids turning cancerous.”

Sven’s RI injection and subsequent hospitalisation proceeded smoothly, and by the time he came out of his isolation he had gained a kg in weight – a good sign that the treatment has worked. Blood tests a couple of weeks later happily confirmed that the treatment had indeed been effective.

The radioiodine facility is the latest phase of a remodelling of ChesterGates’ facilities and the centre is open for business.

If you are concerned about your cat’s weight loss, speak to your vet and arrange a blood test which can diagnose the condition. Left untreated, this can adversely affect the heart and kidneys and can cause high blood pressure.

Surgery or radioiodine (RI) treatment provides a cure for the condition which requires less long-term monitoring.

Around 95 per cent of cats are cured after a single injection of radioiodine, and no further treatment is required.

Unlike with surgery, there is no risk of damage to the parathyroid gland, or the subsequent low calcium levels which can be life threatening.

Cats will need to be referred to ChesterGates by their own veterinary practice. Once the cat has been assessed by the team, they will come in for treatment which is a single injection at the back of the neck performed under a light sedation

Following treatment, the cat will then be hospitalised for 5-14 days in order for the radioactivity to diminish to safe levels for pet owners to resume contact with their pet.

The new centre within the hospital includes a purpose-built cat recovery ward complete with spacious kennels designed for long stay patients, with shelves to perch on or hide underneath, comfortable beds, tempting toys, and plenty of natural light.

Veterinary Referrals Director, Professor John Innes, said: “The radioiodine therapy centre is the last phase of our extensive re-modelling and will place ChesterGates’ at the leading edge of veterinary treatment with some of most skilled veterinary specialists and the latest state-of-the-art equipment and facilities.” 