

If your thyroid becomes underactive you will be started on thyroxine tablets. These have minimal side effects and need only be taken once a day. If you did not take thyroxine you would start to put on weight and feel tired, and there would be potential problems with some body systems, for example; your heart.

Will I need to see a doctor after the Radioiodine Therapy?

Yes. You should see your doctor regularly after receiving the treatment and have blood tests taken. These will allow us to check how your thyroid gland has responded to the treatment.

How many Radioiodine Therapy treatments will I need?

Most people only need one treatment. In some cases, more than one treatment with Radioiodine is required.

If you have any other questions, please ask when you come to the hospital.

We want you to fully understand why you are having this treatment and what the treatment involves.

Important Safety Instructions after Radioiodine Therapy

1. Flush the toilet twice after voiding (passing urine) for the next 48 hours.
2. Use your own utensils, plate and glass, washing separately from the rest of your family.
3. Avoid close contact with pregnant women and children under the age of five.
4. To limit radiation exposure to your partner, it is suggested that you sleep in separate beds for 48 hours.
5. If you vomit within the next 6 hours, please contact the Department of Nuclear medicine on **(03) 9496 5718**

Radioactive Iodine Treatment

Department of Nuclear Medicine

Information for patients receiving radioiodine treatment for an overactive thyroid (Hyperthyroidism)

Produced by:

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Austin Health**

Date produced : February 2010

Date for review: November 2010

What You Should Know About Radioiodine Therapy

Why do you need to have Radioiodine Therapy?

Your doctor has requested you have radioiodine treatment for your medical condition called Thyrotoxicosis, which means you have an overactive thyroid gland.

Radioiodine is seen as the most effective and appropriate mode of treatment for your thyroid problem.

How is Radioiodine given?

It is usually given orally (by mouth), either in capsule or liquid form, which is swallowed. It is tasteless and odourless.

Will I feel ill afterwards?

No, but you may notice a slight burning sensation in your neck for a few days after treatment.

How does the Radioiodine work?

The radioiodine is absorbed by the thyroid gland. The iodine is used to make the thyroid hormone. The radiation from the radioiodine interferes with this process, decreasing the function of the thyroid cells, slowing down their growth; thus your thyroid will not be so overactive.

Radioiodine therapy is widely used around the world and has been used to treat individuals with overactive thyroid glands for the last 30 years.

How long does the Radioiodine remain in the body?

The elimination of radioiodine that is not taken up by the thyroid gland mainly occurs during the first 2 days after receiving the treatment.

Most of the unwanted iodine is excreted in your urine, with very small amounts leaving the body through saliva, sweat and faeces.

What is the level of radiation exposure to others?

Radiation exposure to other family members or members of the public is minimal if you follow the guidelines given for 48 hours after receiving the treatment.

How do I reduce radiation exposure to others?

The amount of radioiodine you will receive is very small, which means that the amount of radiation is also minute. However, it is still necessary to take safety precautions to minimise radiation exposure. The key precautions are: **hygiene, time** and **distance**.

Hygiene: Because most of the iodine leaves the body through urine, it is important to have good

toilet hygiene. For instance, washing hands thoroughly after going to the toilet, wiping the seat with a tissue after use and flushing it down the toilet.

Time: You must limit the time spent in close contact with other people. It is important to avoid close contact with pregnant woman and young children for 2 days after treatment.

Distance: Try not to cuddle children for long. You should try and keep at least 2 feet away from others when together for a period of time.

Can I continue to take my medication?

Your doctor will give you instructions about the tablets you are taking for your overactive thyroid. You may need to stop taking some of these several days before treatment.

What if my thyroid becomes underactive?

Your thyroid gland may become underactive, that is, stop working, after your treatment. This could happen within a few months or many years after treatment.

This is why you are asked to have regularly blood tests, to check the function of your thyroid.