

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

Yes. You will be given a follow-up appointment 6-8 weeks after treatment. You will have a blood test the week before to check that you are getting enough thyroid hormone replacement. You will have follow-up appointments at 3-6 month intervals initially followed by yearly appointments for up to 5 years. Your doctor will determine the frequency of your appointments depending on your disease state.

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. Depending on the extent of your disease, you may require more tracer scans and possibly treatment, according to the scan findings and thyroglobulin levels.

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 ablation treatment for thyroid cancer (with Thyrogen®)

Thyrogen® Injection Appts:

____/____/____ & ____/____/____
at _____am/pm

Therapy Dose ____/____/____

Please call the Nuclear Medicine Registrar on 9496 5718 on the morning of the therapy dose to confirm time/day

Produced by:
© Department of Nuclear Medicine
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, which will be given with Thyrogen[®] stimulation. Radioiodine treatment is seen as the most effective and appropriate mode of treatment for your thyroid condition.

How is Radioiodine given?

You will be required to have two injections of Thyrogen[®] over two days before the treatment dose is given to you. You may experience some local pain at the injection site. The treatment dose will be in capsule form, which is swallowed. The capsule 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. You may also experience mild salivary gland pain and taste alterations.

How does the Radioiodine work?

The radioiodine is absorbed by remnant thyroid cells. Iodine is taken up by the thyroid cells. The radiation from the radioiodine will interfere with the thyroid cell growth, thus removing active thyroid cells.

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 the prescribed period after discharge from hospital.

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 women 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 will need to stop taking these tablets for a period of time before treatment & when to restart treatment after discharge from hospital. This is to achieve adequate TSH suppression, and will be a lifelong requirement. You will need to have regular blood tests to ensure that you are receiving adequate TSH suppression. If you are not receiving enough thyroid hormones, you would start to put on weight and feel tired, as early symptoms.