

INSTRUCTIONS DURING YOUR STAY IN HOSPITAL

As soon as you have been given your radioiodine capsule or drink

- 1 Please remain in your room for the rest of your stay. Do not wander about the ward. Use the call button if you need a nurse.
- 2 Use only the toilet in your room. When passing urine, please ensure it is contained within the lavatory bowl. Male patients should sit to pass urine. Flush the toilet twice after use.
- 3 Try to use disposable tissues to contain sneezes, coughs etc.
- 4 Please wash up your dishes and cutlery after use. These will be kept in your room for checking after you leave.
- 5 You can have visitors except for pregnant women and children. Each visitor may stay for up to one hour per day. They should sit behind the shields provided and avoid close contact with you.
- 6 Suck a sweet (excluding red ones) every hour on the day of your treatment and the day after to prevent build-up of radioiodine in your salivary glands.
- 7 Eat and drink as normal apart from fish or any food and drink that might contain iodine - check with ward staff if in any doubt. Do not increase your fluid intake above normal- this may reduce the effectiveness of the radioiodine.
- 8 Please note that nursing staff are happy to attend to your needs but are not allowed to spend unnecessarily long periods in your room.

As soon as the radioiodine remaining in your body has fallen to a low enough level, you can go home - this usually takes 2-3 days. Staff will make regular measurements of the level to ensure you are not kept longer than is necessary.

Once home, wash the clothes you were wearing during your stay and please follow the advice given to you regarding restrictions on close contact with others, especially children and pregnant mothers.

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Radioiodine Ablation Treatment Your Questions Answered

*The following information applies to your treatment - **PLEASE READ IT CAREFULLY**. If you have any other queries, call us on **0845 1558202** and the Consultant will be happy to answer these.*

Why do I need treatment?

Your Consultant has referred you to this Department for treatment with radioiodine to destroy any thyroid tissue remaining after your operation. This is necessary for the effective treatment of your condition.

What does radioiodine treatment involve?

You will be admitted for a few days to a single room (with shower and WC) on Brent Ward, level 08. On your day of admission, you will be given the radioiodine as a capsule to swallow or as a drink through a straw. Some of this will concentrate in your thyroid and the rest mainly passes out in your urine in the next few days. This will place some restrictions on your movements for the rest of your time in hospital - see instructions on Page 4.

Are there any contra-indications?

Radioiodine treatment cannot be given to pregnant women.

Females between 12 and 55 will therefore normally be required to have a pregnancy test unless

- you have a current period
- have ceased periods at least 5 years previously or
- you have been sterilised for more than 5 years

Breast-feeding mothers will need to cease feeding completely (but only for the infant currently being fed) - but also see contact advice below

What about my current tablets?

If you are taking Thyroxine tablets, you will need to stop these three weeks before your admission to hospital. If you have any doubts about other tablets you are taking, please contact this Department on 0845 1558202 as soon as possible. Our Consultant will advise

you when to restart the Thyroxine tablets after your treatment.

Eating and drinking

You should avoid any foods or other products that may contain iodine in this 3-week period. These include fish and other seafood, some health foods (e.g. Complan, Ensure) and multivitamins, glacé cherries (the red food dye E127 contains iodine), TCP, and some hair rinses. Check the labelling carefully on products you use and check with the Department if in any doubt.

Are there any side-effects?

No. Radioiodine has been used for over 40 years with no long-term side effects. However, because you will no longer have a thyroid gland it will be necessary to start or resume taking Thyroxine tablets following your discharge on a permanent basis. These have no side effects and need only be taken once a day.

Will I need to see a doctor after the treatment?

Yes. Our Consultant will write to your own doctor explaining your treatment and asking him to carry out blood tests to check your dose of Thyroxine is correct. You will also have regular tests and follow-ups at Derriford clinics to check your progress. Although you may need only one radioiodine treatment, it is sometimes necessary to give more. The tests we carry out will show if further treatment is needed.

Will there be any danger to my family?

No, but some restrictions will be necessary on close contact with others. In particular, you should avoid non-essential close contact with pregnant women and with young children, particularly kissing and cuddling, **for up to three weeks** after leaving hospital. Detailed advice will be given before you are discharged and again after your follow-up scan the week following your treatment

Are there any extra risks in having children afterwards?

No. Forty years of experience in using radioiodine has shown no effect on the children of patients who have had previous radioiodine treatment. **However, you should avoid becoming pregnant for six months or fathering children for four months after treatment.**

RADIOIODINE ABLATION TREATMENT

YOUR STAY IN HOSPITAL

IMPORTANT: Please bring a complete change of clothes including underwear and footwear in which to travel home. Anything you wear or use in the room after treatment can be taken home - Please wash clothing straight away. You will also need a supply of sweets (not red ones as they may contain iodine) - see below.

On admission to Brent Ward, level 08 at Derriford Hospital you will be given a single-bedded room with its own bathroom with shower, washbasin and toilet.

Later the same day, you will be given your radioiodine treatment in the form of a capsule or drink by a Physicist from the Nuclear Medicine Department who will be pleased to answer any queries you have. On the morning of discharge you will have a scan in the Nuclear Medicine Department as well as a follow-up scan a week after having your radioiodine.

Some of the radioiodine will be taken up in your residual thyroid tissue and the remainder will be excreted predominantly in your urine over the next few days plus some in your perspiration, saliva and nasal secretions.

Safety legislation requires that we take steps to minimise the risk of spread of any excreted radioiodine and we therefore ask you to observe the procedures on the back page of this leaflet.

Useful information:

Department of Nuclear Medicine (level 06) ☎ 0845 1558202
Brent Ward (level 08) ☎ 0845 1558116
Derriford Hospital (switchboard) ☎ 0845 1558155

Personal notes:
