

Information for Patients

Your MIBG Treatment

WHY AM I HAVING MIBG?

MIBG is used to treat several types of tumour. Your Consultant Oncologist will have discussed with you the reasons why you have been advised to have MIBG. If you have any further questions then you should discuss these with your Consultant Oncologist.

WHERE WILL I HAVE MY TREATMENT?

You will have a single room on Brent Ward, level 08, for up to seven days. The room has its own shower and WC. A TV with DVD player and telephone are also provided. You may want to bring something to keep you occupied during your stay.

WHY DO I NEED TO BE NURSED IN A SPECIAL ROOM?

MIBG is a form of internal radiation therapy. After you have had your treatment, we need to take some special precautions. This is because your body will contain the radioactive material and radiation, similar to X-rays, will be emitted from your body. This means that anybody close to you will receive a dose of radiation. The level of radioactivity in your body will decrease quickly over a period of days as most of it leaves your body in your urine. We care for you in a side room to reduce other people's radiation dose.

WHEN WILL I HAVE MY TREATMENT?

You will have been sent some Potassium Iodate tablets with your admission letter. Before we can give you your treatment we will need to check that you have taken two tablets each day for two days before your admission. If you have not taken these tablets you will not be able to have your treatment as the treatment may damage your thyroid gland.

Your treatment will be given to you in your room on the day of your admission.

HOW IS MIBG TREATMENT GIVEN?

MIBG is given directly into the blood stream. We usually place a cannula into a vein in your left arm. (A cannula is a fine tube that is placed into a vein using a needle). The MIBG is then given slowly, through the cannula, usually over about 40 minutes.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN AFTER I HAVE HAD MY TREATMENT?

You must stay in your room. The usual stay is 5-7 days and each day the Nuclear Medicine staff will take a measurement, using a monitor, to see how much radioactivity is left in your body. These measurements are used to help us decide when you can leave hospital.

Due to the possible long-term risks associated with being regularly exposed to patients receiving radiation therapy, the nursing staff will reduce the amount of time they spend with you after you have received your treatment. On the day of your admission the nurse will discuss ways in which we can care for you and establish how often you would like us to check on your condition, during the day and night. We will, however, try to ensure that one nurse is responsible for your care each day.

Please tell the Nuclear Medicine staff if you are planning to leave the country within three months of your treatment as the very small amounts of MIBG left in your body may be picked up by radiation detectors at airports and ports.

WHAT ARE THE VISITING ARRANGEMENTS?

You can have visitors (but not children or pregnant women) for up to an hour per visitor per day from the day after your treatment. Although visitors may enter your room, they must stay as far away from you as possible (i.e. sit in the chair whilst you remain in bed) and wear a protective gown, face mask and gloves. You should also place the lead shield between yourself and your visitors. It is important that you do not give your visitors anything to take out of your room.

WILL I EXPERIENCE ANY SIDE EFFECTS WITH MIBG TREATMENT?

As raised blood pressure can be a rare side effect of MIBG, the doctor will monitor your blood pressure regularly while you are receiving the treatment. You may feel sick during the first 24 hours after your injection, but we will give you medicine to try and prevent this. Please tell the nursing staff if you have any side effects as they can provide advice and may give you some medicine to ease any discomfort.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN ON THE DAY I AM DUE TO LEAVE HOSPITAL?

On the day you are due to leave hospital we will ask you to take a shower. You can take your own clothes and towels home with you. Please wash them separately when you get home in order to remove any traces of radioactivity. The nursing staff will generally make sure you have 10 days supply of Potassium Iodate tablets to take home with you and a letter for your GP with information regarding your treatment, contact details and proposed follow-up arrangements.

When you leave hospital you will still have a small amount of radioactive iodine in your body and because of this the Nuclear Medicine staff will provide you with information regarding contact with other people. You will probably be advised to avoid long periods of close contact with other adults for a few days and with children and pregnant women for up to two weeks.

We will also ask you to have a scan in the Nuclear Medicine department before you go home which will be similar to the one you had before treatment.