

RADIOIODINE THERAPY FOR HYPERTHYROIDISM

600–800 MBq

Purpose of the treatment

This treatment is for controlling hyperactivity of the thyroid gland.

Preparing for the treatment

- Two weeks before treatment you should avoid:
 - iodine salt
 - dairy products
 - eggs
 - fish, seafood and algae product
 - red cocktail cherries
 - iodine cough medicines and vitamins
- You should not eat for two hours before and two hours after taking the treatment capsule.
- Your referring doctor will provide instructions about taking thyroid medications before the treatment.
- Other medicines are allowed to take normally
- Radiographic contrast agents may interfere with the therapy for several months. Notify the Nuclear Medicine Unit as soon as possible before taking the treatment capsule if you have had any radiology studies that used a contrast agent **6 weeks before** your radioiodine therapy.
- Women who are pregnant or breast-feeding cannot undergo this iodine treatment because of its radioactivity.
- Breastfeeding must be finished for at least 3 weeks right after the radioiodine treatment

How the treatment is administered

The therapeutic substance is a radiopharmaceutical (radioactive medicine) administered as a capsule by mouth. It is the same size as a regular drug capsule and should be swallowed whole with some water.

You will not sense the radiopharmaceutical and the capsule does not contain ingredients that cause generalised allergic reactions. You can have this treatment even if you are hypersensitive to iodine.

Duration of the treatment

You should expect the visit for receiving the capsule to take about 15 to 30 minutes. You may leave the Nuclear Medicine Unit as soon as you have taken the capsule.

Follow-up care

Your thyroid medication will resume according to the referring doctor's instructions. Follow-up monitoring generally takes place at your local hospital or health centre.

Much of the radiopharmaceutical will be excreted into your urine in the first few days after taking the therapeutic dose. Since your urine will be radioactive, you will need to make sure that all of it goes into the toilet. You should flush the toilet twice and wash your hands thoroughly after each lavatory visit. Drinking plenty of fluids will speed up the elimination of excess radiopharmaceutical from your body.

Environmental considerations

You will be a source of mild radioactivity after the treatment. You must take steps to protect the people around you from unnecessary exposure to the radiation you emit.

Please observe these radiation safety measures:

- For the **first 14 days** after receiving the treatment capsule, restrict the following to a total of half an hour each day:
 - Holding or being next to children under school age, or other close proximity to children.
 - Close proximity to pregnant women.
 - If there are children under two years of age in your family, day-care or babysitting arrangements should be made for them.
 - Children and pregnant women will be safe at a distance of two metres.
- For the **next 27 days**, restrict close proximity to children and pregnant women to a maximum of 3 hours each day.
- Avoid sleeping in the same bed with anyone, children and pregnant women included, for **8 days after** receiving the treatment capsule.

During the first week after receiving the capsule, you should also avoid close proximity to other people besides children and pregnant women. Stay at least a metre away from other people during this time, and if you are near someone for more than two hours, stay at least two metres away the entire time. Take this into account in your sleeping arrangements or when travelling by car, for example (separate beds and a distance of two metres for 8 days). Avoid situations in which observing these restrictions will not be possible.

Family members over 60 years of age will be sufficiently protected if the restrictions are observed for 2 days.

If your work requires close proximity (1 metre) to a co-worker throughout the work day, you will not be able to work during the first 6 days.

Child care workers, in particular, will need sick leave unless their duties can be changed temporarily to avoid close contact with children. The referring doctor will evaluate whether sick leave is needed and for how long, and will provide the necessary medical certificate.

Both men and women who undergo this treatment must not conceive a child for 4 months afterwards.

Travelling

You may use public transport on your way home if the trip takes less than one hour in each vehicle. You should limit your travel time in public vehicles to about two hours for each trip during the first week.

When travelling abroad, radiation detectors at border crossings may disrupt your trip more than 2 months after the treatment. The Nuclear Medicine Unit can provide a certificate of your treatment if needed for travel.