

Your Radioiodine Therapy for Hyperthyroidism Explained (NT131Y)

Please read this patient information carefully as it
contains information on preparing for the scan

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Aim of the patient information

This patient information is for patients having radioiodine therapy as treatment for hyperthyroidism. It aims to tell you about the treatment and what will happen.

Please read this patient information carefully as it contains important information about preparing for your treatment.

General information

A member of staff from the department will contact you to discuss the treatment before your appointment. If you have any questions or worries about any aspect of your treatment, please take this opportunity to speak to our staff.

If you are unable to attend on your appointment day, please contact the department as soon as possible.

What is hyperthyroidism?

Your thyroid gland uses the iodine in your diet to make a hormone called thyroxine. This hormone helps to control your metabolism.

You have been diagnosed with hyperthyroidism which means that your thyroid gland is producing too much thyroxine. This causes your metabolism to be too fast.

What is radioiodine therapy?

Your doctor has asked us to treat your hyperthyroidism with radioiodine therapy.

You will be asked to swallow a small capsule, which has no odour or taste, with a drink of water. This capsule contains a small amount of radioactive iodine.

Your thyroid gland will quickly take up most of the radioactive iodine, in the same way as iodine within your normal diet. Then the small amount of radiation produced by the radioactive iodine will reduce the amount of thyroxine that your thyroid gland can produce. It may be several weeks before you feel the benefit of your treatment.

What are the benefits and risks of the test?

Everyone receives some radiation every day from the radioactivity in the air, food we eat and even from space. Overall, the benefit of treating your hyperthyroidism with radioiodine therapy outweighs the small risk from the radiation.

What if I am pregnant or breastfeeding?

If you are pregnant or breastfeeding, you **must** inform the department as soon as possible. The radioactive iodine may pass from you to your child and cause unnecessary harm to your child. For this reason, you will not be able to have radioiodine therapy whilst you are pregnant, and breastfeeding must be stopped before treatment. You will not be able to restart breastfeeding after treatment.

What if I want children after the treatment?

If you are considering trying to conceive a child **within 6 months** after your treatment, please contact the department, or discuss this when a member of our department contacts you.

What do I need to do before the treatment?

If you are taking tablets to control your hyperthyroidism, then this medication may interfere with your radioiodine therapy. **You must contact the Nuclear Medicine Department as soon as possible.** You will be advised if it is necessary for you to stop taking any of your tablets and for how long, if required. Please adhere to this advice carefully, as you will only receive your radioiodine therapy if you have followed these instructions from your doctor.

Some other foods and products containing iodine may also interfere with your radioiodine therapy. You must also avoid the following for **2 weeks** before your treatment:

- Cough medicine and expectorants (containing iodine)
- Health foods and vitamin supplements (containing iodine)
- Henna hair dye and skin lotions (containing iodine)
- Iodised table salt and sea salt
- Seafood
- Seaweed (agar, carrageen and kelp)

What should I do on the day of the treatment?

You must drink plenty of fluids and only eat a light breakfast. Please then fast until after your treatment.

As the test involves small amounts of radiation, we ask that you are **not** accompanied by children under 18 or anyone who may be pregnant. You may bring one adult with you to the department.

What do I need to do after the treatment?

After swallowing the capsule, you will be slightly radioactive for several weeks.

Unlike you, your family, friends, colleagues and other members of the public have no need for exposure to this radiation. Please follow the below instructions to minimise the unnecessary exposure of other people to this radiation.

For **2 days** after your treatment, you must:

- Drink plenty of fluids and empty your bladder frequently
- Flush the toilet twice
- Sit down when using the toilet
- Wash your hands thoroughly after using the toilet
- Use your own towels
- Wash your flannels and towels separately
- Wash crockery and utensils separately

Other restrictions will be discussed and finalised on the day of the treatment which will be dependent upon the dose you are given, but can be summarised as follows:

- For **21 to 27 days**, stay at least 1m away from children under 2 years of age and anyone who may be pregnant.
- For **16 to 22 days**, stay at least 1m away from children between 2 and 5 years of age.
- For **11 to 16 days**, stay at least 1m away from children between 5 and 11 years of age.
- For **6 to 12 days**, stay at least 1m away from children 12 years and over and adults.
- For **15 to 28 days**, sleep alone.

It may also be necessary for you to take some time off work.

We advise you to keep this patient information for future reference. On the day of your treatment, you will also receive a yellow card confirming the finalised

restrictions. You must carry this card at all times until the restrictions have finished.
Please contact us if you have any questions or concerns regarding these restrictions.

Radiation information

If you would like to find out more about medical radiation, please access the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/medical-radiation-uses-dose-measurements-and-safety-advice>

Contact details

If you have any questions about any of this information, please contact the Nuclear Medicine Department on 01522 573103.

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