

GUIDE

**Instructions to
patients treated with
radioactive iodine**



Disclaimer

This is general information developed by The Ottawa Hospital. It is not intended to replace the advice of a qualified healthcare provider. Please consult your healthcare provider who will be able to determine the appropriateness of the information for your specific situation.

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The radioactive iodine used for your treatment will remain in your body only temporarily. Most of the iodine not taken up by your thyroid gland will be eliminated during the first few days after your treatment. The iodine leaves your body mainly in your urine, but small amounts may leave in your saliva, sweat and feces.

Exposure to radiation from the iodine in your body may occur if other people remain very close to you for long periods of time or if the iodine is deposited where other people may have contact with it, e.g. bathroom sink.

Although there is no evidence that the radiation from this amount of iodine will cause harmful effects, it makes sense to minimize the exposure, no matter how small. We therefore recommend that you take the following simple precautions for 4 days following your treatment/discharge from the hospital:

1. Drink plenty of liquids. This will help the radioactive iodine leave your body more rapidly.
2. Avoid kissing and sexual intercourse and, sleep alone.
3. Avoid prolonged physical contact, especially with children and pregnant women.
4. Wash your hands with plenty of soap and water after you go to the toilet.
5. Flush the toilet 3 times after each use.
6. Use separate towels and washcloths.
7. Do not go to work unless you can satisfy the above conditions both at work and while traveling to work.

In addition, if you are a woman of childbearing age:

1. Avoid pregnancy for 3 months following your treatment.
2. Avoid breast feeding for 12 months.

If you have any questions regarding these instructions, please call the Nuclear Medicine Division at 613-761-4831 ext. 8.

Notes
