Royal Infirmary
Edinburgh

RADIOACTIVE IODINE TREATMENT
INFORMATION FOR IN-PATIENTS

Please read the following information about the use of radioactive iodine. After
reading this please sign the section at the end and bring it with you when you come
for your treatment.

Before your admission
If you have been on thyroxine, or tri-iodothyronine treatment before your admission, this is
usually stopped at least 2 weeks before admission. Alternatively, if you are being treated
with Thyrogen injections in the days leading up to your admission, your thyroxine
treatment will not be stopped. If your thyroxine or tri-iodothyronine treatment has not been
stopped and you are not booked in for thyrogen injections, please ring the Endocrine clinic
(0131 242 1480) and ask to speak to one of the doctors for clarification. You may find it
helpful to visit the ward before your admission in order to see the type of accommodation
available and discuss practical aspects of your stay with the nursing staff. To arrange a
visit please ring Ward 207 on 0131 242 2071. If you have any general queries about your
treatment or your diagnosis please ring the Endocrine clinic (0131 242 1480) and ask to
speak to the Endocrine Registrar.

Safety
A number of precautions are taken during your admission and for a period of time
afterwards to minimise exposure of others to radiation. The safety procedures are
designed to reduce the exposure of others to less than half of the annual amount of
radiation that everyone receives naturally. To put this into context, this amount of radiation
is less than the difference in the natural background radiation between different parts of
the country (for example that associated with living in Cornwall compared to that in
Scotland). Over the first few days after your treatment some of the radioactive iodine is
excreted in urine, sweat, saliva and other body fluids. The remaining radioactive iodine is
concentrated in areas of thyroid tissue (the neck), where the radioactivity gradually
decays. As a rough guide the amount of radioactivity halves every 7 days. If you are
planning to bring with you personal items that are valuable, there is potentially a risk of
contaminating them, so please discuss this with Charge Nurse in Ward 207 (Tel. 0131 242
2071) before your admission.

During your admission
Your treatment will be given after your admission to the ward (usually Ward 207), and
usually on the day of your admission, as a capsule or a drink. The duration of stay in
hospital is variable, depending on the dose of radioactive iodine but tends to be 2 - 3
days. The radioactivity in your body will be monitored and you will be allowed home once a
safe level has been reached. Your hospital accommodation comprises a single room with
an en-suite toilet and shower room. During your stay you will have to be confined to your
room. There is a TV and radio available but make sure that you bring plenty of reading
material and other items to occupy your time. £5 phone cards can be purchased. Smoking
is not allowed for safety reasons as there is piped oxygen going through the room. If you
must smoke please let the nursing staff know prior to your admission and appropriate
arrangements can be made.
Visiting times are 2.30 – 4 p.m. and 6.30 – 8 p.m. Visitors are allowed but must remain at
least 1 metre away from you. The time allowed for each visitor will be 1 hour for the first
day, and 2 hours per day on each following day. Pregnant women and children will be allowed to visit for 15 minutes each day. Nursing staff likewise will be coming in for very short periods of time (which is necessary in order to minimise exposure to radiation). There is a buzzer that you can use if you require assistance. The cutlery and crockery used are disposable. You may prefer to bring your own cutlery and crockery, but be aware that they may become contaminated and have to be washed separate from other cutlery and crockery after your discharge. Sometimes disposable paper bedclothes may have to be used. Clothing worn during your stay in hospital will be regarded as contaminated and will have to be either washed separately, or stored (by yourself) for 2 months before re-use. In view of this you may wish to use old clothes during your stay.

If you have queries about specific items that you wish to bring in, or other issues you want to discuss, please ring Ward 207 on 0131 242 2071, and ask to speak to the nurse in charge.

After your discharge
At the time of your discharge from hospital you will be given instructions about thyroxine and you will receive an appointment to come back to the Endocrine Clinic in about 3 months. If these arrangement have not been made please ring the Endocrine Clinic (0131 242 1362). A whole body scan may be performed about 10 days after your treatment; if this is required you will be given a letter with the appointment date and time.

After your discharge it is important that you take some simple precautions to avoid exposing others to radiation, especially children. The following are the precautions which you should take:

Public Transport
- There is no restriction on the use of public transport.
- It is possible that radioactive iodine treatment may trigger sensitive airport security systems. If you are planning to travel by air in the first three months after treatment, you will be given a card which you can show to the airport staff.

Places of entertainment
- Do not visit places of entertainment for 1 day.

Returning to work
- Most people can return to work the day after they leave hospital.
- If your work involves food preparation you should wear disposable gloves for the first 14 days.
- If your work involves close contact with children or pregnant women for more than 15 minutes per day you should not return to work for 14 days.

Sleeping with an adult in the same bed
- Do not sleep with an adult in the same bed for 8 days.

Close contact with children and pregnant women
- Avoid any close contact (e.g. do not cuddle children) for 14 days. It is quite safe to be in the same room provided you remain at least 1 metre away most of the time.
- Avoid extended periods of close contact for 27 days (e.g. do not sleep in the same bed as a child or pregnant woman).
Pregnancy

- It is very important that women receiving radioactive iodine DO NOT become pregnant for 6 months following treatment.
- If you are, or might be, pregnant, or are planning to become pregnant in the next few months, it is important that you tell the doctor BEFORE you go for your treatment.
- If you are a woman of child-bearing age, the clinic doctor may arrange for you to have a pregnancy test before you receive the radioactive iodine.
- If you are breast feeding it is important that you tell the doctor BEFORE you go for your treatment.

It is also recommended that men who receive radioactive iodine do not father children for 4 months after treatment.

Please take the Patient Consent with you when you go for your treatment.
Patient Consent

RADIOACTIVE IODINE TREATMENT

I have discussed the patient’s treatment with him / her.
I have supplied a copy of the appropriate ‘Information For Patients’ and have discussed
the precautions he / she should take to minimise the radiation exposure of other people.

Doctor’s Name: __________________________________________
(PRINT)

Signature: ________________________________ Date: ________________

I have read and understood the Information For Patients.

I give my consent to receive radioactive iodine treatment.

For women of reproductive age

- I confirm that I am not pregnant and that I will tell the hospital staff if I become
  pregnant before I receive the radioactive iodine treatment.
- I understand that I should not receive radioactive iodine treatment when I am
  pregnant and I should avoid pregnancy for at least 6 months after receiving the
  radioactive iodine treatment.

Patient’s Name: __________________________________________
(PRINT)

Address: ______________________________________________________
(PRINT)

______________________________________________________________

Signature: ________________________________ Date: ________________