Western General Hospital
Edinburgh

RADIOACTIVE IODINE TREATMENT
INFORMATION FOR INPATIENTS

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 537 1753) 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 2 on 0131 537 2223. If you have any general queries about your treatment or your diagnosis please ring the Endocrine clinic (0131 537 1753) 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 Sister in Ward 2 (Tel. 0131 537 2223) before your admission.

During your admission
Your treatment will be given after your admission to the ward (usually Ward 2), 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 3 - 4 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 en suite facilities; you will notice that the shower has no curtain, which is deliberate for ease of decontamination. During your stay you will have to be confined to your room for most of the time. There is a TV and radio on site but no video. Make sure that you bring plenty of reading material and other items to occupy your time. 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. 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 2 on 0131 537 2223, and ask to speak to the nurse in charge.

**After your discharge**
At the time of your discharge from hospital you should have been started on treatment with thyroxine and you will receive an appointment to come back to the Endocrine clinic in about a month. If these arrangement have not been made please ring the Endocrine clinic (0131 537 1753) and ask to speak to one of the doctors. Depending on individual circumstances we may arrange to monitor the radioactivity in your body periodically after your discharge over a period of a few weeks.

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 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: ________________