

Radioactive Iodine Treatment for Hyperthyroidism

For patients who will get I-131 therapy, with a dose of 16 mCi to 29 mCi

Read this resource to learn about:

- What radioactive iodine treatment is
- How to prepare
- What to expect
- What to do after treatment

Call the Nuclear Medicine department at 416 340 3311 if:

- you need to cancel or reschedule your appointment
- you are going to be late



What is radioactive iodine treatment?

Radioactive iodine is a substance that gives off radiation. It is used to treat hyperthyroidism.

Your health care provider will provide you with a capsule, or in some cases a liquid, which you will swallow and it will be absorbed by any remaining thyroid tissue.

The radioactive iodine kills both normal thyroid cells and thyroid cancer cells.

How do I prepare for the treatment?

- Have a light meal 1½ to 2 hours before your appointment.
- If you are able to get pregnant, we will need you to do a urine pregnancy test. Try to come to the appointment with a partially full bladder.

Important: If you are pregnant, there are possible side effects to the developing baby.

- If you are breastfeeding or chestfeeding, stop **before** therapy. Do not start again when the treatment is finished.

Where do I go?

Toronto General Hospital
200 Elizabeth Street

If you have not registered before at University Health Network:

- please come 30 minutes before your appointment time
- go to Patient Registration (on the Ground floor, near the Elizabeth Street entrance)

Then go to Medical Imaging reception on the 1st floor of the Peter Munk Building.

What happens during the treatment?

A health care provider will give you a capsule that contains the radioactive iodine. You will swallow the capsule. In some cases, it may be a liquid.

Then the health care provider will give you special instructions to follow. This is to protect other people and your home from the radiation.

What do I do right after the treatment and for the next 48 hours?

- Don't eat anything for 1 hour.
- Drink lots of clear fluids.
- Empty your bladder often.
- Flush the toilet two times after each use and wash your hands very well with soap and water.
- Sit on the toilet while peeing.
- Wash your hands with plenty of soap and warm water throughout the day.
- Separate your bath towels, face cloths, cutlery and dishes from the rest of the family and wash these items last.
- Suck on hard candy or lemon slices during the first 24 hours. This will help you with the flow of your saliva.

Other important instructions for after treatment

- Sleep alone for 10 days.
- Avoid long periods of close contact with children under 12 years old or pregnant people for 10 days.
- Do not return to work for 4 days if you work physically close with others (less than 1 metre apart).
- **Important: Call the emergency numbers provided on the next page if you vomit within 12 hours of getting the therapy. This could affect your treatment.**

What else do I need to know?

- You may have a sore throat or it may be hard to swallow.
- You can have sex again 1 week after having radioactive iodine treatment.
- Use effective birth control if there is any chance of you or a partner getting pregnant. You may want to talk to your doctor about birth control methods. It is very important that you:
 - Do not get someone pregnant for 2 months after having radioactive iodine treatment.
 - Do not become pregnant for 6 months after having radioactive iodine treatment.
 - If you were breastfeeding or chestfeeding, do not start again. You can still plan to breastfeed or chestfeed if you have children in the future.

Numbers to call in an emergency

If you have a medical question:

- Monday to Friday
8:00 am to 5:00 pm → Call the Nuclear Medicine Department at 416 340 4800 ext. 8562 – Dr. Aaron Hendler, Dr. R. Mohan, or Dr. K. Verbeeten
- After hours and weekends → Page the radiologist on call through Locating at 416 340 3155

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- Radiation Safety
24 hours → Page the Radiation Safety Officer through locating at 416 340 3155



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