

Patient Information Sheet

# Patients Having Radio-iodine Ablation



**The Beatson**  
**West of Scotland Cancer Centre**  
1053 Great Western Road, Glasgow, G12 OYN

This leaflet is for patients who will come to Ward B3 for radio-iodine Therapy. The ward is on Level 2 of the Beatson West of Scotland Cancer Centre. We hope this leaflet will give you a guide about what to expect, but please remember our staff will discuss everything in detail with you and will be happy to help with any questions or concerns you may have.

## **How Can I Prepare for Coming Into the Ward**

Prior to coming into the ward for treatment you will usually be asked to attend on 2 consecutive days for an injection. This is to stimulate any thyroid tissue left behind to improve effectiveness of the treatment.

When you come to ward B3 for your Radio-iodine capsule we will explain all of the practical aspects to you. We administer the Radio-iodine therapy as a capsule usually in the morning. This is usually on the day of admission. If you are unable to swallow a capsule please make your consultant aware prior to the procedure so alternative arrangements can be made. Afterwards you will stay in one of our single rooms with toilet and shower facilities. You have to stay in this room at all times until you are ready to go home. All of the rooms have television, video and DVD facilities.

There is also a telephone which receives incoming calls only.

**Room 5: 0141 301 7151      Room 6: 0141 301 7152**

**Room 7: 0141 301 7153      Room 8: 0141 301 7154**

- Because of your type of treatment it is best that you do not take any personal belongings into the room except a small selection of toiletries. Any items taken in cannot be removed from the room with the exception of spectacles or hearing aid. You can take your mobile phone into the room.
- You may wear your usual day clothes and your own nightclothes You are able to keep your wedding ring on. You may also bring your own towel for showering. However, these would need to be discarded after use and could not be returned to you.

- If you would like newspapers or magazines during your stay, you can leave money with your nursing staff when you come into the ward. They can then arrange to buy them for you.

## **For Female Patients**

### **Pregnancy and Breast feeding**

If you are a woman up to the age of 55 you will be required to perform a pregnancy test. All female patients under 55 will need to complete a pregnancy test prior to any treatment.

**Radio-iodine must not be given if there is any possibility that you might be pregnant.**

It is also important to avoid becoming pregnant until six months after your Radio-iodine.

If you are breast feeding a baby, you will have to discontinue this altogether 4 weeks prior to treatments.

### **For Male patients**

We would advise that you use contraception for 4 months after your treatment to avoid making your partner pregnant. Condoms should be worn for any sexual encounter for 4 months.

### **Named Nurse**

During your stay in B3 you will be looked after by a team of nurses under the guidance of a named nurse.

### **Visiting**

- The visiting hours are open visiting throughout the day.
- Because of the nature of your treatment, visiting time is limited to 30 minutes per person per session (60 minutes per day).
- Visitors are shown where it is best to sit in your room while they are visiting.
- Please check with nursing staff who will advise you on the precautions needed during your stay.
- Unfortunately, for their own well-being expectant mothers and persons under 18 years of age are not allowed to visit.

## Do I Need to have a Special Diet?

Your consultant may recommend you follow a low iodine diet one week prior to your treatment and if so, we recommend the following:

- Do eat fresh meat, vegetables, fresh fruit, pasta and rice. These are low in iodine.
- Do not eat foods artificially coloured pink or red such as canned or glace cherries, canned strawberries, spam, salami, certain pastries and sweets. The colouring material E127 is rich in iodine so look at labels when buying food although food coloured by spices is allowed.
- Do not take cough medicine, iodised table salt or sea salt as these contain iodine.
- Try to cut down on dairy products such as eggs, cheese, milk and milk products as they all contain some iodine.
- Avoid fish, kelp and all sea food.
- Avoid vitamin supplements which contain iodine.

### Approximate Meal Times:

<b>Breakfast</b>	<b>8:30 am</b>
<b>Lunch</b>	<b>12:45pm</b>
<b>Dinner</b>	<b>5:30pm</b>

Your food will be served on paper plates and eaten with plastic cutlery. Disposable items are used to stop the Radio-iodine being spread out of the room.

## **Precautions While in Hospital**

The Radio-iodine is in capsule form which you are given to take through a straw. A drink is occasionally given instead. Most of it leaves the body in your urine, but small amounts will be present in other body secretions, including perspiration. A few precautions are required to stop the Radio-iodine being spread around. These mainly consist of normal standard of personal hygiene and we will explain this to you on the day. It is vital that you report any urinary or faecal incontinence and even dribbling as this will cause contamination of the room.

It is important to drink plenty of fluids to help the natural excretion of the Radio-iodine. You may find it beneficial to bring in diluting juice.

There is a restriction on the amount of time Nursing staff can spend with you during the treatment, which means they cannot stay and chat with you for lengthy periods. However they do understand that this may feel a little isolating for you, but they are on hand at all times if you needed to call them for any problems or felt unwell in any way.

## **Are There any Side Effects?**

A few patients experience some minor side effects such as a sore throat, dry mouth, voice hoarseness or nausea. This usually settles within 24 hours. There may also be some swelling around the thyroid area. It can become red and hot to touch. Please let your nursing staff know if you experience any side-effects as medication can be prescribed to relieve your symptoms.

## **Leaving Hospital**

On the day of discharge you will get a scan of your thyroid to assess the uptake of the radioactive iodine. When you are ready to leave, usually after 1-3 days, we will give further advice on precautions you need to take at home. These will include restrictions on the amount of contact you can have with other people for 7-14 days. Please note that constipation may delay your discharge. Inform the nursing staff if this is a problem.

**If you have any questions or concerns about your treatment please contact ward B3 on 0141 301 7623.**

### **Contacts:**

Melanie White, Senior Charge Nurse: 0141 301 7623

Irene Wotherspoon, Advanced Clinical Nurse Specialist:  
0141 301 7261

Lucy Dornan Clinical Nurse Specialist: 0141 301 7261

### **More Information:**

Thyroid Cancer Website: [www.butterfly.org.uk](http://www.butterfly.org.uk)



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