

# **Information on your Radioactive Iodine Treatment**

**Nuclear Medicine Department**  
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Your doctor would like you to have radioactive iodine treatment for your overactive thyroid. This leaflet will answer some of the questions you have.

## **Do I need to do anything right away?**

Yes. If you are pregnant (or think you may be pregnant), or are breastfeeding, please phone us now.

If you are responsible for looking after small children or have small children at home, or you are a carer for someone, please contact our staff for advice.

## **Why does an overactive thyroid need treatment?**

If untreated an overactive thyroid can be harmful over a long period of time and can cause heart problems and bone thinning.

## **How does the radioactive iodine treatment work?**

We will give you a capsule containing radioactive iodine to swallow along with a drink of water. The capsule will have no taste. The radioactive iodine is taken up by the thyroid, and it destroys a large number of overactive thyroid cells. Your neck will remain slightly radioactive for 4 weeks after your treatment while the radioactive iodine takes effect.

## **Are there side-effects?**

Some patients notice a mild sore throat, or tenderness of the throat after treatment, but this usually clears up after a few days.

## **Will my thyroid become underactive after treatment?**

About 70% of patients (7 out of 10 patients) develop an underactive thyroid in the first year after treatment. It is possible that your thyroid will become underactive, so you must have regular blood tests to check how your thyroid is working. If your thyroid becomes underactive you need to take thyroxine tablets every day.

## **How much radioactivity will I be given and why?**

We can give you up to a maximum of 800MBq. Your doctor will decide the amount you receive as this depends on many factors.

### **To reduce exposure to those around you, we advise you take the following simple precautions following your treatment:**

1. Return home using a private car or taxi (if possible).
2. Public transport is usually acceptable if your journey is under 1 hour.
3. Radioactivity will be present in your urine for 3 days – please wipe spilled or splashed urine immediately and always flush, washing hands afterwards. Men should sit to pass urine.
4. Radioactivity will also be present in your saliva and sweat for 3 days - don't share cups or cutlery, avoid kissing, and wear disposable gloves when preparing food for others.
5. We recommend that children aged 5 and under are cared for by others for up to 27 days\*.
6. For up to 27 days\* avoid all close contact with children aged 5 and younger and pregnant women. Stay at least two arms length away at all times.
7. For up to 16 days\* avoid all close contact with children aged 6 and older and adults. Stay at least two arms lengths away at all times.
8. To reduce radiation risk to your partner you should not share a bed for up to 16 days\*.

\*The duration of restrictions depends on how much radioactivity you are given. You will be given specific restriction dates to follow when you attend for your treatment. The days shown here are for the longest possible restriction times.

## **Radioiodine, pregnancy and fertility:**

To receive this treatment you must not be pregnant or breastfeeding. If you are pregnant (or think you may be pregnant), or are breastfeeding, please phone and tell us. We advise women to avoid becoming pregnant for 6 months following treatment. Men should also avoid fathering a child for 6 months. The treatment does not affect your fertility.

## **When Can I Return to Work?**

This depends on your job. You may need a minimum of 3 days off work. For most people, this period may be extended to anything up to 27 days, particularly if your place of employment involves you working in close contact with other adults, or requires you to be around young children, young adults or pregnant women. We will discuss this with you at your appointment.

## **Other Points**

Postpone non-urgent routine dental and GP appointments for 27 days following your treatment because of the radioactivity in your neck.

## **Radiation detectors at airports and ports**

We don't recommend long journeys until 4 weeks after treatment. You may travel after this period but it is possible that you will set off radiation detectors in some ports and airports for up to 6 months after your treatment. If you intend to travel within 6 months of your treatment keep this document or the precaution card we give you on the day of your treatment as this includes our contact phone number.

## **Any more questions?**

One of the department's physicists or a member of the technical staff will be happy to discuss any further questions you have on the day of your treatment. If you have any questions before your appointment please phone on:

**0141 301 7900** or **0141 211 3000** (Switchboard out of hours)

## **Travel to Hospital by Patient Transport (Ambulance or Ambulance Car)**

A hospital or clinic appointment does not mean that you qualify for patient transport. If for medical reasons, you need this form of transport, you or your carer should arrange this. Please call the Scottish Ambulance Service on 0300 123 1236 **at least 3 days** before your appointment but no sooner than 30 days in advance. They will ask you a series of assessment questions to determine your need. Please tell the transport service how long your appointment will last, (this is on your appointment letter), if you don't there may be no ambulance available to take you home.

Lines are open 8.00 am to 8.00 pm Monday to Saturday.

If you no longer need the ambulance or car please call the cancellation number on 0800 389 1333 as soon as possible before your appointment date and tell them your name, address, phone number, date of appointment and hospital clinic you are attending. Please also call the Nuclear Medicine department to cancel your appointment if you no longer need it.

Please note they will only transport your escort or companion if absolutely necessary for your medical need.

## Travel Costs

Patients can claim their travel costs if they receive Family Credit, Income Support or are on a Low Income. Please note:

- Patients must bring proof of entitlement e.g. a letter confirming entitlement to benefit, HC2 certificate, NHS Tax Credit Exemption Card, Asylum Registration Card (ARC).
- Bus or rail tickets will be required as evidence.
- We can reimburse the cost of petrol for patients using their car.
- In some cases the travelling costs of an escort can be claimed.
- Taxi fares will not be reimbursed.

All patients travelling from the Highlands and Islands are entitled to claim **some or all** of their public transport costs of travel.

Please ask staff for further information or directions to the cashiers office.

## Parking

**Car parking** is free but there is a four hour maximum stay in operation Monday to Friday (from 7.30am to 4.00pm). Please allow time to find a car parking space.

Disabled parking spaces are available in the main car parks.

## Public Transport

For transport information (including timetables, journey planners and routes) visit [www.travelinescotland.com](http://www.travelinescotland.com) or call 0871 200 2233

For more travel information please [www.nhsggc.org.uk/patients-and-visitors/transport-travel-parking/](http://www.nhsggc.org.uk/patients-and-visitors/transport-travel-parking/)

## **Comments and Suggestions**

We welcome comments and suggestions about any aspect of your attendance at the hospital.

Please speak with a member of staff or you can use our online feedback system, [www.nhsggc.org.uk/patientfeedback](http://www.nhsggc.org.uk/patientfeedback)

You can also comment on Care Opinion [www.careopinion.org.uk](http://www.careopinion.org.uk)

## **Complaints**

If you wish to complain then in the first instance speak with a senior member of staff. You can ask for a guidance leaflet which is available from all clinics. You can also contact the Complaints Office on: 0141 201 4500 or [complaints@ggc.scot.nh.uk](mailto:complaints@ggc.scot.nh.uk)

