



Radioactive Thyroid Ablation with  $^{131}\text{I}$  Sodium Iodide is a tool used in the treatment of patients with thyroid cancer after the thyroid has been surgically removed. It is common that small amounts of tissue will be left behind in surgery to preserve structures near the thyroid, most notably the recurrent laryngeal nerve and parathyroid glands. Once the iodine is absorbed, the radioactive emissions work to destroy any and all thyroid tissue that remains within the body.

A whole-body scan is performed 9-10 days after the ablation dose. This serves not only to identify residual tissue within the neck, but also to check for the possible spread of thyroid tissue to any other locations in the body.

Patients will often receive injections of a drug called Thyrogen® in the days prior to receiving an ablative  $^{131}\text{I}$  dose. In this case, specific preparation is not required for the exam. If you are to perform the ablation without Thyrogen®, your physician will advise you on exam prep.

You will need to avoid food or drink 2 hours before and 2 hours after your appointment. You may drink water during this time.

Due to the nature of radioactive emissions from  $^{131}\text{I}$  Sodium Iodide, female patients under the age of 56 will be required to perform a pregnancy test the day of the ablation unless documentation of surgical hysterectomy can be provided.

## Nuclear Medicine Thyroid Ablation Post-Care Instructions

- Drink plenty of fluids for the first 2 days.
- Maintain a distance of 6 feet from family members and other individuals.  
*Do not be concerned about being close to other adults for brief periods of time.*
- Do not hold small children and avoid contact with pregnant women. Avoid direct or indirect contact with infants and children for 4 days. Consider having children stay outside the home with other family members if possible.  
*Indirect contact includes close proximity to other adults who will directly interact with children.*
- Arrange living space at home (e.g. bedroom, bathroom) that can be used exclusively by you for 4 days. Sleep in separate beds to reduce radiation exposure to your mate for 4 days.
- Minimize time spent in public places (public transportation, stores, theaters, sporting events, restaurants).
- If your treatment was given to you orally, some of the radioactivity will remain in your stomach for 24 hours. It is unlikely that it will make you nauseated; however, if you feel you have to vomit, try to do so directly into a toilet and then flush several times. Notify your physician as soon as possible if you vomit in the first 24 hours.
- Radioactive material may be present in your urine for a time. Use the toilet from a sitting position and flush the toilet after each use. If urine is spilled, wash the affected areas several times with soap and water using disposable paper towels. This includes urine spilled in places such as a hotel room.
- A small portion of the radioactive material will be found in your saliva and sweat. Do not allow others to eat or drink after you. You may consider using disposable plates and utensils during this time. Use separate towels and washcloths.
- Wash your clothing, towels, bed linen, etc. separately from those used by others.
- Do not become pregnant in the next 3 months.
- Radioactivity can be found in breastmilk following administration of  $^{131}\text{I}$  Sodium Iodide. Patients being treated with  $^{131}\text{I}$  Sodium Iodide must completely stop breastfeeding for the current infant or child.