

RADIOIODINE ABLATION.

WHAT IS RADIOIODINE ABLATION AND WHY AM I HAVING IT?

Radioiodine Ablation is a special type of radiation therapy to treat thyroid cancer. After your thyroid gland has been removed (called a thyroidectomy) a large dose of radioactive iodine is given to destroy any remaining cancer cells and thyroid tissue.

HOW IS RADIOIODINE ABLATION DONE?

After being diagnosed with thyroid cancer, a surgeon will remove your thyroid gland (thyroidectomy). You will be discharged from hospital after this operation, and then asked to return in approximately 6 weeks for radioiodine ablation. For this procedure, you will be admitted into a single hospital room, where visitors are restricted. The radioiodine ablation dose is simply a capsule which you swallow like an ordinary tablet. You will be discharged when your radiation reading is low enough for you to leave the hospital (usually within 3 -4 days). One week after your radioiodine dose, a scan will be performed to ensure that the treatment was successful.

ARE THERE ANY SIDE EFFECTS?

You may occasionally get a dry mouth and sore neck (due to inflammation of the salivary glands): These side effects can be reduced by drinking lots of fluid and sucking lollies for up to 1 week after your radioiodine dose. Other side effects directly due to the radioiodine capsule are uncommon (such as nausea) and will be discussed with you at the consultation. Please inform the Doctors and Nurses if these side effects occur while you are in the hospital.

Please notify a staff member prior to receiving a radioiodine dose if you have an allergy to iodine.

A Nuclear Medicine Doctor will discuss any side-effects with you at the consultation.

HOW DO I PREPARE FOR MY RADIOIODINE ABLATION?

A Nuclear Medicine Doctor will speak to you (consultation) before performing this procedure. During this consultation, the Doctor will explain how and why the radioiodine ablation is performed, as there is special preparation needed for this, such as thyroid medications being ceased and a blood test taken. All instructions will be explained and written down for you during the consultation. As long as you follow these instructions, there will be no difficulty with this procedure.

SHOULD I TAKE MY NORMAL MEDICATIONS?

Thyroid medications need to be ceased 6 weeks prior to receiving radioiodine ablation. Other medications containing iodine also need to be ceased for at least 4 weeks, and no CT scans with iodine contrast should be performed 6-8 weeks prior to radioiodine ablation.

CAN I EAT AND DRINK ON THE DAY OF MY RADIOIODINE ABLATION?

Yes. There is no need to fast for any part of the Radioiodine Ablation.

WHAT SHOULD I BRING FOR MY RADIOIODINE ABLATION?

Please bring your referral letter, Medicare Card, and your past Iodine Scans, X-rays, CT scans, MRI Scans, and Ultrasound.

Please bring books, magazines, and preferably old clothes while you are admitted into the hospital room. Please do not bring expensive items such as mobile phones, jewellery, laptop computers, PDA's, portable music players or games into this room. Whatever you bring into the room will be monitored before you leave, and if contaminated will be stored until the radiation level drops below a safe limit (which may take up to 3 months).

WHAT IF I AM PREGNANT OR BREAST-FEEDING?

The test is not performed on pregnant or breast-feeding women. If you are pregnant, think you might be or are unsure, please notify the staff prior to the start of the procedure.

FOLLOW-UP:

1. Patients will have a whole body scan performed 1 week following the administration of the radioiodine dose.
2. Usually, you will be placed on thyroid-replacement hormones at the time of discharge from the hospital. Follow-up scans and blood tests will be performed at your Doctor's discretion.
3. A repeat ablation dose may be given 6-12 months after the initial dose, depending on your follow-up test results.

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS UPON DISCHARGE:

For **1 week** following Radioiodine Ablation, you should:

- Avoid being close to other people for long periods of time, especially young children and pregnant women.
- Avoid taking unnecessary journeys by public transport.
- Do not return to work, visit places of entertainment or other places where you would be close to others.
- Sleep alone.
- Drink at least 2 litres of fluid daily (if there are no medical contra-indications such as renal or heart failure). Flush the toilet 3 to 4 times after each use and wash your hands thoroughly.
- Use disposable eating utensils for meals, and dispose of these after each use. (If necessary, wash utensils and cutlery separately).
- Use tissues instead of a handkerchief. Dispose of tissues into the toilet and flush 3 times.
- Wash your clothes separately.
- A separate, more detailed instruction sheet will be given to you prior to receiving the radioiodine capsule.

CAN I TAKE THE RESULTS WITH ME?

Before you leave the Department, a Doctor will check the scan and you will be asked to wait while this occurs. Normally the results are prepared after you have left the Department and are posted to your Doctor within 24 hours (they should arrive within a few days). If the results are required for an appointment before this time, please notify staff and a result may be able to be given to you 45 – 60 minutes after the test is done.

WHERE DO I GO FOR MY RADIOIODINE ABLATION?

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