

ADVICE TO PATIENTS LEAVING HOSPITAL AFTER RADIOACTIVE IODINE TREATMENT

On leaving hospital following radioactive iodine treatment certain restrictions on your behaviour will be necessary in order to ensure that the radiation exposure to other people is kept to a minimum.

GENERAL ADVICE

Following treatment, the body rapidly eliminates any radioactive iodine not taken up by the thyroid. It is eliminated mainly in the urine and to a lesser extent in the saliva and natural secretions. Care will need to be taken to avoid any spread of this excreted radioactive iodine. Normal hygiene should be sufficient to avoid any problems when using a toilet. Items such as cutlery, crockery, towels etc should be for the sole use of the patient (once washed they will not pose a problem to others).

You must contact the hospital if you should vomit or be incontinent of urine within 24 hours of treatment.

No restriction is placed on one off close contact with an adult (such as by visiting a place of entertainment) so long as it is for no longer than 3 hours.

CONDUCT AT HOME

You are advised that, whereas occasional brief periods of contact with members of your household will not be harmful, you should restrict non-essential contact (especially to children and pregnant women) by observing the following restricted behaviour.

- Stay at least 1m (40 inches) away from children under 3 years old of age and pregnant women for 21 days.
- Stay at least 1m (40 inches) away from children between 3 and 5 years of age for 16 days.
- Stay at least 1m (40 inches) away from children over 5 years of age and adults who are not comforters and carers for 11 days.

Providing your comforter and carer is aware of the radiation risk there are no restrictions on sleeping in the same bed.

If you have sole responsibility for the care of a child, it is recommended that alternative arrangements be made for childcare for **21 days** following treatment. If this is not practicable then you will need to discuss this with your referring doctor.

Women who have received radioactive iodine **must** stop breast feeding.

TRAVEL

On leaving hospital after treatment there are no restrictions on the use of private or public transport. However on the day of leaving hospital you should not sit immediately adjacent to another passenger or driver for longer than 6 hours on private and 3 hours on public transport.

You must inform the hospital if you are planning any prolonged, or overseas travel (land, sea or air) following your treatment to determine any restrictions that may apply.

RETURN TO WORK

If it is unlikely that any one person will spend more than an 8 hours period of each working day at a distance of less than 2 metres (80 inches) from you, then under this assumption you can return to work on the day following treatment.

If you have to work closer than 2 metres (80 inches) to another person for prolonged periods an appropriate time period for return to work will be determined.

If your work involves food preparation then it may be appropriate to advise your employer of the possibility of contamination and the need for precautions to avoid it.

Special precautions should be taken in cases where your profession (e.g. nursery school teacher or midwife) brings you into prolonged close contact (more than 15 min per day) with children or pregnant women. You are advised not to return to work for **21 days** following treatment.

Where your employer carries out work that may be affected by radiation (radiosensitive work, e.g. radionuclide assay, radiation monitoring, or work with photographic or other radiosensitive materials) you should notify your employer.