



Radioiodine Thyroid Therapy General Information & Timeline

After consultation with your Nuclear Medicine doctor, follow the steps outlined below.

Before Therapy

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| 8 Weeks | Avoid Iodine contrast x-rays or CT scans. |
| 6 Weeks | If your doctor has advised you, stop your thyroid hormone medications. |
| 2 Weeks | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Do not eat the following:<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Seafood like shellfish, fish, kelp, or seaweed● Multivitamins with iodine● Iodized salt, sea salt2. Eat less of the following:<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Milk or other dairy products like ice cream, yogurt, cheese, etc.● Cured and corned foods like lox, ham, corned beef, and sauerkraut● Breads that are made with iodate dough conditioners, such as commercially produced bakery items (white bread, rolls, and bagels)● Foods and/or medications that contain red food dyes like vitamins, candy, or pink/red cereals |

Therapy

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| Day 1 | If continuing thyroid hormone medications, receive first Thyrogen injection at your endocrinologist's office. |
| Day 2 | If continuing thyroid hormone medications, receive second Thyrogen injection at your endocrinologist's office. |
| Day 3 | Treatment with Radioactive Iodine pill. Fast for 2 hours before your appointment (water is OK). Come alone if possible, and do not bring small children or pregnant women with you. You will be able to drive home after treatment. This is also your first day of Isolation Precautions. |
| Day 8 | Last day of Isolation Precautions. |
| Day 10 | Return to the Nuclear Medicine department one week after Radioactive Iodine Therapy for a one hour whole body scan. |

Community Memorial Hospital – Ventura

Mountain Tower ~ 147 North Brent Street ~ Ventura, CA 93003 | P 805-948-5026 | F 805-948-0433

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Radioiodine I-131 FAQs

What is Radioiodine I-131?

Radioiodine (sodium-I131) is a form of radiation therapy that has been used for many years to treat certain conditions of the thyroid. The two most common thyroid conditions treated with radioiodine are hyperthyroidism and thyroid cancer. It is safe and highly effective, but requires certain precautions and guidelines to minimize radiation exposure to you and your loved ones.

How long does I-131 stay in the body?

I-131 stays in the body for a short period of time, generally a few days. Most of the radioiodine that doesn't go directly into the thyroid will naturally leave your body in the first few days after treatment, mostly through urine, and partially through saliva, sweat, and bowel movements.

How can I reduce radiation exposure to others?

Radiation exposure to other people can be reduced significantly by maintaining a reasonable distance (approximately six feet) and minimizing the amount of time spent around others. This is especially important for small children and pregnant women. Your Nuclear Medicine doctor will go over requirements and guidelines to help reduce exposure to others.

What can I expect after the treatment?

Plan to set up a secluded area in your home, such as a private bedroom and bathroom, for the first two days after your treatment. Avoid all physical contact with other people during this time.

Common symptoms from the treatment may include a sore throat and minimal nausea. You can use over-the-counter medications, like Tylenol, to help alleviate these symptoms. Please call your Nuclear Medicine doctor if these symptoms persist for more than 72 hours.

You will return to the Nuclear Medicine department one week after administration of the Radioactive Iodine therapy for a one hour whole body scan.

What can I expect from the treatment?

Your Nuclear Medicine doctor will consult with you before your treatment to address guidelines, dose amount, and outcomes, and you will have an opportunity to ask questions.

On the day of treatment, you will have a chance to ask your Nuclear Medicine doctor any last minute questions. You will then be given the I-131 pill to take with water. The entire experience will last about 45 minutes, and you'll walk out immediately after taking the pill. It's important that you do not eat anything for two hours after taking the pill so it absorbs fully into your body.

Pregnancy & Breastfeeding

Pregnancy – This treatment should not be administered during pregnancy. If you are pregnant or could be, tell your doctor. If you are planning to become pregnant, wait at least 12 months after treatment to ensure all radiation has been excreted and your thyroid hormone level is back to normal. Consult your doctor for more information.

Breastfeeding – This treatment is not recommended while breastfeeding. Consult your doctor for more information.

How do I get the most effective treatment?

- Follow the timeline on this Fact Sheet
- Avoid CT scans with iodine contrast for at least 8 weeks prior to your treatment
- Follow a low iodine diet for 2 weeks before your treatment (consult your endocrinologist for diet information)
- Coordinate with your endocrinologist if you are currently taking thyroid hormone medication, like Methimazole (Tapazole), levothyroxine, or cytomel
- Fast for 2 hours before your treatment
- DO NOT bring small children or pregnant women with you on the day of your treatment

Skip long waits at other facilities and schedule your treatment at Community Memorial.

Call 805-948-5026 for an appointment or visit mycmh.org/nuclearmedicine for more information!