

## **GUIDELINES FOR PATIENTS RECEIVING RADIOIODINE TREATMENT**

Your doctor has requested that you undergo a Radioiodine (RAI) Treatment for your thyroid. This sheet is intended to assist you in understanding this treatment and will also provide you with some special instructions to follow before, during, and after your treatment.

### **WHAT IS THE THYROID GLAND?**

The thyroid is a butterfly shaped gland in the neck which secretes hormones to regulate metabolism. These hormones are essential for normal development and maintenance of function within your body.

### **HOW DOES THE THYROID GLAND WORK?**

The thyroid gathers iodine from the food you eat. It is stored in the gland until it is needed to make thyroid hormones. With hyperthyroidism, the thyroid gland is overactive and extra thyroid hormone is made.

### **WHY WILL I RECEIVE RAI TREATMENT?**

Your doctor has decided that RAI treatment is the most appropriate way to decrease the function of the cells in your thyroid gland.

### **HOW DOES RAI TREATMENT WORK?**

RAI treatment works based on your body's own physiology. The radioactive iodine from the pill is trapped in your gland in the same manner it traps regular iodine from the food you eat. The radioactive iodine damages your gland; reducing its activity.

### **IS RAI TREATMENT SAFE?**

RAI has been used for over 50 years and has a very high rate of success. There is also minimal risk. Most of the radioiodine you receive will go to your thyroid gland; there will be some radiation exposure to the rest of your body. This radiation does not generally produce adverse reactions.

### **FOR HOW LONG WILL I BE RADIOACTIVE?**

Most of the radioactivity will be eliminated from your body within the first few days after treatment. It is eliminated in your urine, feces, saliva, and sweat.

### **CAN OTHERS BE EXPOSED TO RADIATION IF I AM RADIOACTIVE?**

YES. There are a few simple things you can do to reduce the amount of radiation others are exposed to.

1. Limit the amount of time you spend with others.
2. Increase the amount of distance between you and others.
3. Practice good hygiene.

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### WHAT SHOULD I DO BEFORE I RECEIVE RAI TREATMENT?

1. You should have a recent thyroid uptake and scan. This will help determine how much RAI you receive.
2. You should not eat or drink for 4-8 hours prior to your appointment time.
3. Be sure you are not pregnant. If there is any chance of pregnancy you will need to receive a serum Bhcg pregnancy test. This should be determined prior to your appointment with us for treatment. Please discuss this with your Doctor. Do not arrive for your appointment if you have not done this. If you are planning on becoming pregnant, discuss how long you should wait following your RAI treatment.
4. You will not be able to breastfeed once you have been treated. Please plan accordingly.
5. You should not take any thyroid medications (T3, T4, PTU, Tapazole, Cytomel) for 1 week prior to your appointment. If you are taking these medications please consult your doctor.
6. You should not be taking any thyroid replacement drugs (Synthroid). If you are taking these medications please consult your doctor.
7. You should not have any iodinated contrasts for 1 month prior to your treatment.
8. You should not have any supplements for 1 week prior to your treatment.
9. Please abstain from eating seafood for 1 week prior to your treatment.
10. If you work in close proximity to others' or if you work with children plan on being out of work for 3-5 days.

### COMMON RECOMMENDATIONS TO ADHERE TO FOR 3-5 DAYS POST TREATMENT:

1. Avoid prolonged physical contact: Sleep alone, avoid kissing, and sexual intercourse.
2. Do not breastfeed. Radioiodine passes into breast milk which can ultimately harm your baby's thyroid.
3. Wash your hands each time you go to the bathroom.
4. Flush the toilet 2-3 times after you have used it.
5. Clean any bathroom surfaces after use.
6. Drink a lot of extra fluids, the more you urinate, the less radioactivity remains in your system.
7. Use disposable eating utensils or wash your utensils separately.
8. Use separate towels and launder anything you use or wear separately from others'.

### AFTER YOUR TREATMENT:

Do feel free to call us with any questions regarding your RAI treatment (438.0600). For everything else you will follow up with your doctor.