

A Guide to Your Admission for Radioactive Iodine Treatment

(Inside Front Cover)

Blank

Treatment Preparation and Precautions

- You have been scheduled for radioiodine treatment on _____.
- Report to Ward 2A at _____. Fasting from _____.
- Follow a low-iodine diet from _____.
- Pack light – refer to the information on ‘Personal Belongings’ (page 8) for details.
- Bring reading materials and/or mobile devices with you.
- Visitors are not allowed during your stay due to the nature of the treatment.
- You must observe these precautions for a minimum of two days after discharge:
 - o Reduce the time spent near others.
 - o Increase your distance from others.
 - o Maintain good hygiene habits.Refer to ‘Post-Discharge Information’ (page 16) for details.
- You must observe these precautions:
 - o For women
 - Do not breastfeed for at least six months after discharge.
 - Use reliable contraception for at least six months after discharge.
 - o For men
 - Use reliable contraception for at least four months after discharge.
- Stop taking thyroxine tablets from _____ to _____.
- If you opt for thyrogen injections, your Nuclear Medicine physician will further advise you on pre-admission preparations.

What You Need to Know During Your Stay in NUH

Contents

Introduction to Radioactive Iodine Treatment	5
Preparation for Treatment.....	6
Treatment Summary.....	7
Items to Bring for Your Stay.....	8
Before Your Stay	9
During Your Stay	10
Safety Guidelines.....	13
Understanding Your Rights and Responsibilities	14
Discharge Information.....	15
Post-Discharge Information.....	16
Directions to NUH Ward 2A.....	20



At NUH, we strive to do our best to care for our patients. To ease the transition to your admission and help you prepare for your treatment, please read this information booklet. This booklet also serves as a reference to the important information and general tips you may need to know during your stay. If you require more information or further assistance, please approach your healthcare team who will do their best to help you with your needs. Your health is of utmost importance to us.

We wish you good health and a speedy recovery.

Introduction to Radioactive Iodine Treatment

Radioactive iodine treatment is a common treatment for thyroid diseases. You will be required to swallow a capsule containing radioiodine which will destroy the cells in your thyroid to treat the disorder.

The radioiodine will be quickly absorbed into your bloodstream and will be taken up by your thyroid. It is normal to experience a dry mouth, a sore throat, and some slight swelling of your salivary glands. These effects are mild and do not last. There is a very small chance that you may feel sick after swallowing the capsule. We will check that you have properly swallowed the capsule.

You will naturally become slightly radioactive for some time after commencing treatment. This radiation level is not high but it is above the legal limit in Singapore for exposure to members of the public. You are therefore required to stay in an isolation ward for a few days while the excess radioiodine leaves your body.

Possible Risks of Treatment

Radioactive iodine has been extensively studied as a risk for developing cancer as a result of treatment. Medical research has shown that the possibility of such a risk is very small; therefore, the use of radioactive iodine is safe.

There is also a very small risk of developing blood malignancies, particularly in patients who are receiving repeated radioactive iodine treatments.

Preparation for Treatment

Reducing your iodine intake before treatment will increase the effectiveness of your treatment. Please try to follow a low iodine diet for seven days before your treatment:

- ✓ Eat fresh meat, vegetables, fresh fruits, pasta, and rice.
- ✗ Avoid fish, fish oils, kelp (seaweed), and seafood.
- ✗ Avoid vitamin supplements and medicines containing iodine.
- ✗ Avoid iodised salt. Ordinary table salt is fine.
- ✗ Avoid dairy products such as eggs, cheese, milk, chocolate, malted milk products (eg. Milo and Ovaltine), ice cream, yoghurt, and butter.

IMPORTANT

You CANNOT undergo radioiodine treatment if you are trying to conceive, or if there is any chance that you may be pregnant. This precaution is to protect your foetus from unnecessary and significant exposure to radiation. If your pregnancy status is uncertain, your radioiodine treatment will be postponed.

Treatment Summary

- Your doctor will first screen you for any contraindications for radioiodine and ensure that you do not have difficulties swallowing capsules. You will then be scheduled for treatment.
- On the day of your treatment, report to Ward 2A which is located at NUH Kent Ridge Wing, Level 2. You are required to fast for four hours before you are scheduled to swallow the radioiodine capsule. Nurses and doctors will then carry out blood tests where necessary.
- Water will be provided to help with the swallowing of the capsule. You must **not** chew the capsule.
- A nuclear medicine radiographer, physician, and a representative from the radiation safety team will then observe you for thirty minutes.
- During your stay, we will measure your radioactivity levels to help us predict when you are able to be discharged. The vast majority of patients are expected to stay between three and four days.

Items to Bring for Your Stay

You may wish to bring the following items:

- Existing medication (please inform your nurse upon admission).
- Assistive items (e.g. glasses and hearing aids).
- A set of clothes for discharge.
- This information booklet.

Personal Belongings

You will be staying alone in a single room with an attached bathroom. A small locker, wardrobe, and essential necessities will be provided.

We will cling wrap your personal belongings for protection against any residual radiation contamination. However, we strongly advise you to limit the number of belongings you bring with you to reduce the risk of contamination upon discharge.

- ✘ Do not bring more than one bag's worth of items.
- ✘ Do not bring any valuables or excessive cash.
- ✓ Reading materials and mobile devices are allowed.

You will be asked to change into a hospital gown and to leave your clothes in the wardrobe. Upon discharge, please change back into your personal clothes and leave the gown on the bed.

For all patients' safety, please do not bring or use personal health equipment/devices or home appliances in the ward. The use of heat emitting devices is strictly prohibited in the hospital. We reserve the right to stop the use of such equipment. Please approach our ward staff for more information.

Before Your Stay

Social Work Service

If you have any social or financial concerns, please discuss with your doctor or nurse so that they can refer you to our medical social workers for assistance.

Financial Services

If you have financial concerns, you may seek assistance from our staff at the Patient Service Centre listed below:

Name of Centre	Location	Operating Hours
Patient Service Centre 3	Kent Ridge Wing Level 3	Monday – Friday: 9am – 6pm Saturday and Sunday: 9am – 1pm Closed on Public Holidays

Financial services offered at the centre include:

- Deposit settlement.
- Advice on using Medisave / MediShield Life / Medisave-Approved Integrated Plans for hospitalisation.
- Advice on other approved hospitalisation financing methods.
- Advice on financial assistance for hardship cases.
- Advice on estimated cost of hospitalisation.

During Your Stay

Meals

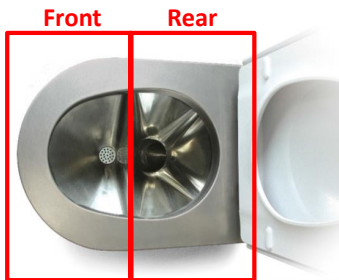
Specially prepared low-iodine meals will be served in plastic bento boxes with disposable cutlery. When you are done with your meal, you will need to dispose the boxes, cutlery, and food scraps into the clear transparent bag provided and tie it firmly with the provided cable ties.

Personal hygiene

Drink plenty of water and shower daily to flush the excess radioactivity from your body. This is important as it reduces unnecessary radiation exposure to you. As a result, you will need to use the toilet more frequently. Urine contains the bulk of radioactivity excreted from your body, so it is essential that you maintain strict and high standards of hygiene to prevent radiation contamination.

You must strictly observe the following instructions:

- The toilet bowl has two separate compartments. The front compartment is designed to contain urine only. Do not throw anything into the front compartment.



- The rear compartment is to be used as per a normal toilet bowl.

- Always sit down (including men) when using the toilet, flush the toilet after use, and wash your hands thoroughly with soap.
- Never urinate or defecate in the shower area.

As your sweat and saliva will contain traces of radioactivity, we seek your cooperation to limit unnecessary radiation contamination in your room.

Amenities

The room is equipped with a TV, a telephone, and an intercom system. Electrical sockets are available for you to charge your mobile devices. Your telco signal may be weak due to the radiation shielding in the walls. There will be no housekeeping service during your stay.

Appointing a Spokesperson

Upon orientation to the ward, please appoint a spokesperson for your hospital stay. We will update you and your spokesperson if there are any significant changes in your condition or if major decisions are required to be made regarding treatment or surgery.

This will help you and your family better understand your condition and treatment.

Wrist Identification Band

A wrist band with your name and identification number will be given to you upon your admission to the ward. If you have any drug allergy or are prone to falls, these will be indicated on your wrist band. Please wear it at all times during your stay at the hospital as this enables our staff to verify your identity and provide safe and appropriate care.

Pain Management

Pain affects every individual differently. Pain can be felt, described, measured and treated. Please inform our doctors or nurses if you are in pain. It is important for our doctors and nurses to know that you are in pain and work on reducing the pain before it gets worse.

Monitoring

The nursing team will come in to record your vital signs twice daily. They will be able to observe you via the CCTV and you may contact them via the intercom.

If you experience constipation, vomiting, or generally feel unwell, contact the nurses immediately.

Strict Isolation

As your safety and well-being is our utmost concern and in the interest of radiation protection for the general public, please remain in the ward until you are discharged.

Visitors

In the interest of radiation protection for your family and friends, we are unable to accommodate visitors during your short stay with us.

No Smoking Allowed

Smoking is prohibited by law throughout the hospital premises.

Respect Our Staff

We are committed to providing you the best care and treating you with courtesy at all times. If our care does not meet your expectations, please let us know.

We ask that you respect our staff and members of the public within our premises. We take any abusive and aggressive behaviour seriously, and will initiate action against anyone in violation of this.

Safety Guidelines

Preventing Falls in the Hospital

Highlight to your care team if:

- You have a history of two or more falls over the last one year.
- You have difficulty standing or walking.
- You experience giddiness or confusion.
- You always have the urge to use the toilet.

Call for assistance

Please press the call bell at the bedside if you require help.

General Safety

- Promptly consume the medication served to you by our nurses.
- Do not take your own medication by yourself.
- Do not adjust or remove any equipment or devices attached to you or around your bed without discussing with our doctors or nurses.

Fire Safety

If you witness or suspect a fire:

- Inform our staff and follow their instructions.

If you hear an alarm:

- You may be directed by our staff to evacuate the premises. Please follow the instructions given by our staff.

Understanding Your Rights and Responsibilities

We believe in fostering a strong partnership with you and your family members during your journey to recovery. If you have any questions about your condition and treatment, please approach our ward staff who will do their best to help you with your needs.

To know more about your rights and responsibilities, please ask our ward staff for a copy of the “Your Rights and Responsibilities” booklet.



Discharge Information

Your radioactivity levels will be monitored daily. Your doctor will advise when you can be discharged once your radioactivity levels have fallen to safe levels. Before going home, you will have a full body scan. This will take about 30-40 minutes. You may be required to return the following day for a repeat scan if needed.

Discharge Time

Discharge from the hospital is estimated to be between 10.00am and 11.30am. Do check with the ward nurse as the discharge time may vary.

Discharge Procedure and Advice

Please ensure that no personal belongings are left behind. Return all hospital property such as gowns, pyjamas, and blankets before leaving the hospital.

Mode of Payment upon Discharge

You can pay your hospitalisation bill using one of the following modes:

- Cash.
- Credit Card.
- NETS.
- Cheque (to be made payable to “National University Hospital (S) Pte Ltd”).
- Medisave.
- Insurance/Employer’s Coverage.

Patients or next-of-kin may visit the Patient Service Centre listed on Page 9.

Going Home

We strongly recommend that you travel home by private transport. Please sit in the rear seat furthest from the driver. There should be no other passengers if possible.

Post-Discharge Information

You will not pose a significant risk to your family and friends as long as you adhere to the post-discharge precautions specified below, which are designed to reduce radiation exposure. Please read and understand the following radiation protection advice. Unless otherwise specified, you must observe them for two days after discharge.

The Most Important Principles:

- Reduce the time spent near others.
- Increase your distance from others.
- Maintain good hygiene habits.

Precautions at Home:

- Try to keep a minimum of an arm's length away from other people.
- Limit the time that you spend in close proximity to other people.
- Keep a set of crockery and cutlery for your own use and wash them separately after use.
- Do not share items such as food, serving spoons, towels, clothing and undergarments, bed linen, and toiletries.
- Where possible, use a separate toilet and sleep on separate beds.
- Always sit down to use the toilet, flush twice after use, and wash your hands thoroughly with soap.
- You should avoid coming into contact with young children (less than 5 years of age) and pregnant women. Make all possible attempts to have your children stay with your family or friends.

Precautions at Work

- You will be given up to seven days of hospitalisation leave if:
 - o Your work requires you to be as close as one metre away from your colleague(s) on a regular basis.
 - o You work with children.
 - o You work with pregnant women.
 - o You work in a radiation-sensitive environment.
- If you think that the small amount of radiation might affect your work, please consult your doctor.

IMPORTANT

- You must observe these precautions:
 - o For women
 - Do not breastfeed for at least six months after discharge.
 - Use reliable contraception for at least six months after discharge.
 - o For men
 - Use reliable contraception for at least four months after discharge.

Social Precautions

- Do not engage in sexual contact. Your bodily fluids are still slightly radioactive and you might unnecessarily irradiate the other person.
- Avoid places, events, and activities that require you to spend at least an hour in close proximity with other people. These may include going to the cinema and restaurants, taking a flight, carpooling, and other social events in crowded and confined areas.
- Try to postpone air travel until a month after discharge. It is possible that you may trigger the sensitive radioactivity detectors installed at the security checkpoints. This is because there may be a tiny but measurable amount of radioiodine that is still residing in your body.

Post-Discharge Information Card

You will be given an information card with a summary of your treatment and the precautions. Please carry this card with you at all times for the duration advised by the Nuclear Medicine Physician during your discharge.

If you are admitted to the hospital for an emergency treatment, please pass the card to your attending doctors so that they will be able to take the appropriate precautions. The medical care provided to you will not be compromised in any way.

In an Emergency

Please contact the Department of Diagnostic Imaging (Nuclear Medicine) immediately at 6772 4212, or proceed immediately to the nearest Emergency Medicine Department to seek medical treatment, if you experience any of the following symptoms:

- Severe pain in your abdomen / salivary glands / bones.
- Severe and continuous vomiting.
- Unexplained vision blurring / double vision.
- Sudden weakness or paralysis.
- Spitting or coughing up blood.

Contact Information

Department	NUH Department of Diagnostic Imaging (Nuclear Medicine)
Phone Number	6772 4212
Email	ddi_enquiries@nuhs.edu.sg
Operating Hours	Monday – Friday: 8am – 5.30pm Closed on Saturdays, Sundays, and Public Holidays

Department	NUH Emergency Medicine Department
Phone Number	6772 5000
Operating Hours	24-hours

Post-Discharge Billing Enquiries

For all post-discharge billing enquiries, please contact:

Phone Number	6511 4338
Email	payment@nhg.com.sg
Operating Hours	Monday – Thursday: 8.30am – 6pm Friday: 8.30am – 5.30pm Saturday: 8.30am – 12.30pm Closed on Sundays and Public Holidays

Directions to NUH Ward 2A



WHERE OUR WARDS ARE LOCATED

- 1 MAIN BUILDING** Ward 20 – 28 : Level 2 • Ward 33 : Level 3 • Ward 41 – 48 : Level 4
Ward 51 – 58 : Level 5 • Ward 61 – 64 : Level 6
- 2 KENT RIDGE WING** Ward 2A : Level 2 • Ward 5A : Level 5 • Ward 6A – 6B : Level 6
Ward 7A – 7B : Level 7 • Ward 8A – 8C : Level 8 • Ward 9A – 9B : Level 9

● Ward 2A: We are located at Kent Ridge Wing, Level 2 (near Lift Lobby 7)

(Inside Back Cover)

Blank

The information provided in this publication is meant purely for educational purposes and may not be used as a substitute for medical diagnosis or treatment. You should seek the advice of your doctor or a qualified healthcare provider before starting any treatment or if you have any questions related to your health, physical fitness or medical conditions.

Information is correct at time of printing (October 2019) and subject to revision without prior notice.

Copyright (2019). National University Hospital

All Rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced without permission in writing from the National University Hospital.

National University Hospital

5 Lower Kent Ridge Road, Singapore 119074

Tel: (65) 6779 5555

Fax: (65) 6779 5678

Website: www.nuh.com.sg

Company Registration Number. 198500843R