

Patient Information Leaflet

A Guide to Your Admission for Radioactive Iodine Treatment

Treatment Preparation and Precautions

You have been scheduled for radioiodine treatment on _____.

Please note the following:

- Report to Ward 2A at **11am**. Please fast from 10am. Breakfast is allowed.
- Follow a low-iodine diet from _____.
- Pack light – refer to the information on ‘Personal Belongings’ (page 8) for details.
- Bring along your reading materials and/or mobile device(s).
- Visitors are not allowed during your stay due to the nature of the treatment.
- You **MUST** observe the following precautions for a minimum of two days after discharge:
 - Reduce the time spent near others.
 - Increase your distance from others.
 - Maintain good hygiene habits.Refer to ‘Post-Discharge Information’ (page 16) for details.
- Additional precautions that **MUST** be observed:
 - For women
 - Do not breastfeed for at least six months after discharge.
 - Use reliable contraception for at least six months after discharge.
 - For men

- Use reliable contraception for at least six months after discharge.
- Stop taking thyroxine tablets from _____ to _____.
- If you opt for thyrogen injections, your Nuclear Medicine physician will further advise you on the pre-admission preparations required.

What You Need to Know During Your Stay in NUH

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At NUH, we strive to do our best to care for our patients. To help you prepare for your admission and treatment, please read this information booklet that contains important information and general tips for 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.

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 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 nauseous after swallowing the capsule. We will check to ensure that you have properly swallowed the capsule.

You will remain slightly radioactive for some time after treatment. While the radiation level is not high, it is above the legal limit allowed 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

The risk of radioactive iodine causing cancer has been extensively studied. Medical research has found that the possibility of such a risk is very small, and the use of radioactive iodine is safe.

Radioactive iodine also carries 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, 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 to radioiodine and ensure that you do not have difficulties swallowing capsules. You will then be scheduled for treatment.
- On the day of your treatment, please report to Ward 2A, located at NUH Zone C, Level 2. You are required to fast for four hours before you are scheduled to swallow the radioiodine capsule. Thereafter, blood tests (if required) will be carried out.
- You **MUST NOT** chew the capsule. Water will be provided to help you with the swallowing of the capsule.
- During your admission, we will measure your radioactivity levels to help us estimate your discharge date. Majority of patients stay between three and four days.

Items to Bring for Your Stay

- 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.

While we will cling wrap your personal belongings for protection against any residual radiation contamination, we strongly advise that you 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.
- ✓ You may like to bring reading materials and mobile devices.

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.

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. For clarification, please approach our ward staff.

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	NUH Kent Ridge Wing, Zone D, D03-01	Mondays – Fridays: 9.00am – 6.00pm Saturdays and Sundays: 9.00am – 1.00pm 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

Appointing a Spokesperson

Upon orientation to the ward, please inform the nurse/doctor of your appointed spokesperson for your hospital stay. The appointed spokesperson will be the one the hospital will contact to provide updates on significant changes in your condition, and when major decisions regarding your treatment are required. This arrangement will help you and your family better understand your condition and treatment plan.

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.

Amenities

The room is equipped with a television, a telephone, and an intercom system. Electrical sockets are available for you to charge your mobile device(s). Your telco signal may be weak due to the radiation shielding in the walls.

There will be no housekeeping service during your stay.

No Smoking Allowed

Smoking within the hospital premises is prohibited by law.

Meals

Specially prepared low-iodine meals, in plastic bento boxes with disposable cutlery, will be served during your stay. When you are done with your meal, you will need to dispose of the boxes, cutlery, and food scraps into the clear transparent bag provided. Please tie the transparent bag firmly with the accompanying 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 are likely to 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 similar to a normal toilet bowl.
- **ALWAYS** sit (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.

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 observe you via CCTV, and enter the room to record your vital signs daily. You may also contact them via the intercom. If you experience constipation, vomiting, or 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 your room 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.

Respect Our Staff

We are committed to give you the best care, and treat you with courtesy at all times. Tell us if our care does not meet your expectations. We ask that you respect our staff and members of the public. We do not condone abusive and aggressive behaviour, 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.
- Have difficulty standing or walking.
- Experience giddiness or confusion.
- 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 unsupervised.
- Do not adjust or remove any equipment or device(s) 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.

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 discharge, you will need to undergo 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

The discharge time is estimated to be between 12.00pm and 2.00pm. Do check with the ward nurse as the discharge time may vary.

Discharge Procedure and Advice

Please ensure that you do not leave your personal belongings behind. For safety considerations, please leave all hospital property including gowns, pyjamas and blankets etc. within the room.

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 back seat furthest from the driver. Ideally, there should not be other passengers travelling with you.

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, designed to reduce radiation exposure, specified below. Please read the following radiation protection advice. It is important that you understand the precautions required, and observe them strictly (unless otherwise specified) for four days after discharge.

The Most Important Principles:

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

Precautions at Home:

- Keep a minimum of an arm's length from other people.
- Limit the time that you spend in close proximity to other people.
- Use a dedicated set of crockery and cutlery, and wash them separately after use.
- Do not share items such as food, serving spoons, towels, clothings, undergarments, bed linen, and toiletries.
- Where possible, use a separate toilet and sleep on separate beds.
- Always sit when using 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. Where possible, arrange for your young children to stay with your relatives or friends.

Precautions at Work

- You will be given up to seven days of hospitalisation leave if:
 - Your work requires you to be within one metre from your colleague(s) on a regular basis.
 - You work with children.
 - You work with pregnant women.
 - 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:
 - For women
 - Do not breastfeed for at least six months after discharge.
 - Use reliable contraception for at least six months after discharge.
 - For men
 - Use reliable contraception for at least six months after discharge.

Social Precautions

- Do not engage in sexual contact. Your bodily fluids are still slightly radioactive and you might unnecessarily irradiate your partner.

- 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), NUH Main Building, Zone F, F01-31
Phone Number	6772 4212
Email	ddi_enquiries@nuhs.edu.sg
Operating Hours	Mondays – Fridays: 8,00am – 5.30pm Saturdays, Sundays, and Public Holidays: Closed

Department	Emergency/Children's Emergency, NUH Main Building, Zone F, Level 1
Phone Number	6908 2222
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	Mondays – Thursdays: 8.30am – 6.00pm Fridays: 8.30am – 5.30pm Saturdays: 8.30am – 12.30pm Closed on Sundays and Public Holidays

Directions to NUH Ward 2A



● **Ward 2A: We are located at Kent Ridge Wing, Zone C, Level 2 via Lift Lobby C**

National University Hospital

5 Lower Kent Ridge Road, Singapore 119074

OneNUHS Hotline: (65) 6908 2222

OneNUHS General Enquiries: contactus@nuhs.edu.sg

OneNUHS Appointments: appointment@nuhs.edu.sg

www.nuh.com.sg

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The information in this brochure is meant for educational purposes and should not be used as a substitute for Medical diagnosis or treatment. Please seek your doctor's advice before starting any treatment, or if you have any questions related to your health, physical fitness or medical condition.

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