

## Information sheet on radioiodine therapy

Dear patient,

We would like to make your stay at our ward as pleasing as possible. Here you will find several useful information's on radioiodine therapy.

### When is a radioiodine therapy performed?

Radioiodine therapy is performed in various diseases of the thyroid gland:

In Graves' disease (hyperthyroidism) reduce the function of the thyroid gland

In case of autonomous thyroid nodules (hyperthyroidism) to deactivate the hyperactive nodule

in case of thyroid carcinoma of residual thyroid tissue

In case of goiter to reduce the size of the thyroid

### How does a radioiodine therapy work?

The radioiodine therapy is a nuclear medicine treatment. You will receive from us a capsule containing radioactive iodine for swallowing. The capsule dissolves immediately in the stomach. The released iodine follows the natural metabolism and is absorbed in the thyroid gland. The thyroid cells are specifically disintegrated by the action of radioiodine. Over time, the radioactivity will drop. A part of the radio-activity will be excreted over the urine, stool and saliva.

### How do you prepare? What are you allowed to bring alone for radioiodine therapy?

For the radioiodine therapy it is often necessary to have a specific medication or to discontinue thyroid medication. Your doctors will inform you appropriately.

The duration of the radioiodine therapy differs according to the underlying disease of the thyroid. Your doctors will inform you regarding the duration of your therapy. Please bring all your medications with you.

A welcome effect of the radioiodine therapy is to reduce or turn off of the thyroid gland function. The thyroid gland produces important hormones. Depending on your laboratory values, the doctors will prescribe thyroid hormones in form of tablets. If necessary, you will need them lifelong.

### Television, Telephone, Newspaper

There is a TV and a telephone in the room. A newspaper is offered to you for free daily.

For radiation protection reasons no visits are allowed during radioiodine therapy. You can move freely in the patient room. Please bring light, comfortable clothing with you for your stay in the room.. It is allowed to bring your personal belongings to the patient room. Your clothes and your personal belongings will not be exposed. Note, however, that these can be contaminated through urine, stool and saliva with radioactivity.

Please limit yourself to hand luggage and wash your laundry after the radioiodine therapy in the washing machine with the usual programs. Note that personal items can be contaminated by radioactive traces as well. Your personal belongings are checked for radioactive contamination and cleaned if necessary before you are being dismissed.

### What are the side effects and what can you do about it?

A part of the radioactive iodine will be taken up by the salivary glands. In order to empty the salivary glands, you will receive chewing gum and Ricola sweets. Your doctors will inform you accordingly. The radioactive iodine is then emptied from the salivary glands by salivation. This prevents dryness of the mouth, which can occur with repeated high dosed radioiodine therapies. Please note that good dental hygiene is important during the radioiodine therapy.

If possible, no dentures or braces should be worn during radioiodine therapy. Please discharge your toothbrush into the garbage bag before leaving the ward.

Occasionally, mild throat pain or swelling can occur. Please inform your nursing staff. You will receive some ice for cooling. In general the discomfort will disappear after a few hours.

During the radioiodine therapy patients should not be pregnant. After the radioiodine therapy, patients should use contraception for 6 months. Everything else is allowed.

### **What else is to be considered?**

Smoking is not allowed on our ward. The nursing staff will provide you with a nicotine patch, if desired. Please let us know.

A part of the radioactive iodine will be excreted over the urine. Men are asked to urinate while sitting. Please wash your hands thoroughly after every visit to the toilet.

The water from the toilet and the shower has to be collected in special tanks. These tanks have a limited capacity. Please shower as briefly as possible.

Please open your window regularly for ventilation.

### **When will you be dismissed? What is to be observed after dismissal?**

The doctors are measuring the radiation daily. Dismissal occurs as soon as the radiation is below the statutory limit value. After dismissal, you are still weakly radioactive. We would like to point out that you should avoid close contact with small children or pregnant women in the first few days after the dismissal. A distance of one meter is sufficient. Before dismissal, you will be informed by the doctors about the behavior at home.

### **Who can you contact?**

Please ask us about what seems important to you. Doctors and nursing staff will do everything to make your stay at our ward as easy as possible.