

# Radiation Safety Guidelines

## Radioactive Iodine Treatment (<sup>131</sup>Iodine)

Radioiodine is a form of radiation therapy that has been used for many years to treat thyroid conditions. It is safe and effective. However, this requires you to observe precautions to decrease the amount of radiation to yourself, as well as to other people. Below are general guidelines to follow, but you should discuss specific guidelines for your treatment with your radiologist.

### First 8 hours

- Drink one glass of water each hour and use the bathroom as soon as possible when you need to empty your bladder. Men should sit on the toilet while urinating to decrease splashing. Wash your hands and rinse the sink.
- Maintain a distance of 3 feet or greater from all people.

### First 4 days

- Do not share cups, glasses, plates, toothbrushes, or eating utensils. Wash items promptly after using. Other people may use items after they are washed.
- Do not share towels or washcloths with other family members.
- Flush the toilet twice and rinse the sink and tub after use.
- Wash your linens and clothing separately from other family members.
- Drink plenty of decaffeinated liquids.
- Do not immediately discard into the trash your toothbrush, adult protective undergarments (such as Depends®) or clothing worn the first four days of treatment.

### First week

- Starting 24hrs after your treatment you should suck on sour candy or use lemon drops every 2-3 hours while awake, for a total of 4-5 days.
- Avoid activities where you may be close to others for more than 5 minutes, for example, movie theaters, sporting events and public transportation.
- Make arrangements for others to provide

childcare for infants and very young children.

- Sleep alone unless otherwise instructed by your radiologist.

### First week continued

- Avoid kissing and physical contact with others and maintain a distance of at least 3 feet from women who are pregnant and children under 18.
- Do not travel by air, mass transportation or take prolonged car trips, unless otherwise instructed by your radiologist.
- Do not use the following items during therapy:
  - ⊗ *Disposable plates and utensils*
  - ⊗ *Feminine hygiene products that cannot be flushed down the toilet*
  - ⊗ *Tobacco products (especially chewing tobacco)*
  - ⊗ *Fruit cores, pits or seeds*
  - ⊗ *Chewing gum*

### Additional instructions

- Small amounts of radiation from your body may trigger radiation monitors at airports and border crossings for up to 3 months after treatment. Your doctor will provide you with a letter describing your medical treatment if you cannot avoid these areas.
- Ask your doctor for advice on how to dispose of items that were heavily stained with urine, saliva, sweat or blood.
- Wait at least 6 months before becoming pregnant.
- Do not resume breastfeeding after treatment for your current child, but you may safely breastfeed babies you may have in the future. (In addition, you must stop breastfeeding for 8 weeks before treatment.)
- If you have additional concerns or questions, please call Virginia Mason Nuclear Medicine, (206) 223-6901.

