

I-131 Post Thyroidectomy Therapy Reducing External Exposure: Less than 33mCi Patients

In the days following radioactive iodine therapy, you will need to take steps to prevent radiation exposure to others.

How do I prevent external exposure?

The radioactive medicine you received will gradually change to non-radioactive form. This process releases radiation, which is similar to an X-ray. The number of X-rays emitted will decrease with time and will eventually be gone. You can reduce the exposure of other individuals by **increasing the distance** from them and **decreasing the time** spent close to them. The specific time you need to follow these precautions depends on the amount of radioactive medicine you received.

The following table lists the precautions for patients who received **less than 33 mCi** units. The left column describes the precaution and the right column specifies the number of days you need to follow the precaution.

Precautions	Number of days
Sleep in a separate bed from other adults (greater than 6 feet separation) for	2 days
Sleep in a separate bed from pregnant partners, infants or children for	6 days
Avoid prolonged close contact with children and pregnant women (greater than 6 feet away) for	2 days

Maintain a prudent distance from others (about 3 feet) for	2 days
Drink plenty of liquids (for example water and juices) for	2 days
Delay return to work for	2 days
Limit time spent in public places for	2 days
Limit private travel (about 3 foot separation) (greater than 2 hour trip) for	2 days
Do not travel by airplane or mass transportation for	2 days
Do not travel on a prolonged automobile trip with others for	3 days

How do I prevent internal exposure?

A small amount of the radioactive medicine that you have received could be transferred to other individuals through bodily secretions. The radiation exposure to others from such transfers is low, but following these steps for 2-3 days will help reduce it even more.

- Avoid mouth-to-mouth contact.
- Do not share items that come into contact with the mouth (examples: toothbrushes and eating utensils).
- Use separate or disposable eating utensils and wash them separately.
- Use a separate bathroom, if possible. Keep the toilet especially clean. Flush it two or three times after each use. Keep small children away from the toilet area.
- Men should sit during urination.
- Shower and wash hands frequently (especially after using the toilet).
- Use separate towels and washcloths.

For questions please contact the Thyroid Clinic at: (734) 232 - 6072.

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