

*Better
Together*

Patient information

Radioactive Iodine Ablation Treatment

Department of Nuclear Medicine

What is Radioactive Iodine Ablation Treatment?

You are having high dose radioactive iodine treatment to get rid of any remaining thyroid tissue t you may have. You may recall that the aim of your neck surgery was to remove all of your thyroid gland. It is not uncommon to find some small bits of the thyroid even after the surgery. This would have been shown to you on the scan that you had recently.

It is likely that you will need only one treatment, but sometimes this treatment needs to be repeated after a few months. Your consultant will be able to tell whether you need more treatment after seeing a post-treatment scan (performed at three or six months). It is not a bad sign if you need more than one treatment.

What are the benefits of this treatment?

This treatment will remove your remaining thyroid tissue.

What are the risks of this treatment?

- In the short term, swelling of your neck and salivary glands may occur.
- In the longer term, you could have problems with your salivary glands, but this usually settles.

Are there any alternative treatments available?

Your Nuclear Medicine doctor will have discussed whether there are any alternative treatments available to you, when you attended for your scan.

What will happen if I decide not to have treatment?

It is your decision whether or not to proceed with the treatment. Before you sign the consent to treatment form you will have the opportunity to discuss the treatment again with the Nuclear Medicine doctor on the ward.

Getting ready for your treatment

You should go to the Admissions Desk in the main hall of the Hospital. Here you will be directed to Ward 5Y, where the nursing staff will greet you. This is a general ward in which we have two dedicated Nuclear Medicine beds for patients who need some form of radioactive treatment.

This ward is staffed by two Sisters and a team of nurses. They have considerable experience in looking after general medical and Nuclear Medicine patients. They will do everything they can to make your stay pleasant and will be happy to answer any questions you may have. One of the nurses and one of the junior doctors will see you to check your general health.

You will be an in-patient under the care of a Nuclear Medicine Consultant because you are radioactive following your radioactive iodine treatment. Your consultant or a member of their team will see you in the ward before your radioactive iodine treatment. You will be asked to sign a consent form for your treatment.

***Please bring some boiled sweets with you to suck after your treatment. This helps keep the saliva flowing.**

Your treatment

- You will be given an anti-sickness injection called Stemetil. This is a precautionary measure, as we do not expect you to be sick.
- Approximately 30-45 minutes after this injection, two Physicists from the Nuclear Medicine department will ask you to drink some radioactive iodine. This is easy to swallow, and will not have any immediate effect on you.

Occasionally the treatment can be given in the form of a drink.

After your treatment

In the days following your treatment, you may notice your neck and salivary glands swell. This does not happen in all patients, and will settle itself without any specific treatment. However, if this swelling does become uncomfortable, it can be easily treated with aspirin gargles. If you are worried, please ask a member of the nursing staff.

Very occasionally, a patient may feel sick in the day or two following your treatment. This can be helped with anti-sickness medication, which the nursing staff can give you.

Your stay in hospital

What facilities will I have?

- You will have your own single bedroom and toilet.
- You will have a shower cubicle for your own use. This may be shared with the Nuclear Medicine patient in the room next door.

- Your room will have a TV/DVD, CD player/radio and tea and coffee making facilities.
- There is a telephone line in your room. You can phone out of your room but cannot receive incoming calls.
- Meals will be served to you on paper plates. You will use plastic cutlery following your treatment.

Visitors

You can have visitors, but we ask them to follow these instructions:

- After your treatment, visiting is **not** allowed for the rest of the day. On the following days, each adult visitor may stay for up to **one** hour per day.
- Children and pregnant women are **not** allowed to visit.
- Please wear overshoes, gloves and gown when entering rooms. Please place used overshoes and gloves in the waste bin behind the barrier.
- Please **avoid** touching items in the suite of rooms such as taps etc.
- **Do not** use the toilet within the suite of rooms.
- Please avoid close contact with the patient and, whenever possible, stay at the end of the bed.
- Visitors must not eat or drink whilst visiting you.

What happens when I go home?

- Please get rid of any food or drink you may have before going home. The clothes you have had with you in hospital can be washed normally.
- **You are still slightly radioactive.** There are some rules and regulations you will need to follow. Your consultant will discuss these with you, and you will be given a yellow card with these written instructions on to take home.
- Your consultant will also give you instructions about when to restart your Liothyronine / tri-iodothyronine / T3 (thyroid) tablets, and how much to take.
- There are no restrictions on your travel home.

After your treatment

You should carry this letter with you if you are travelling through train stations, airports and seaports. These areas may have very sensitive radiation detectors in place that can detect extremely small quantities of radiation. It is just possible that, until the radioactivity from this test has completely left your body, you may trigger one of these detectors. In the unlikely event that this occurs, there is no reason to be concerned.

Customs officials who operate these types of detectors are experienced in understanding what the detector has picked up, and after asking you a few simple questions and conducting a brief non-intrusive examination with a hand held detector, will let you pass on your way as soon as possible.

Different countries have different procedures and some may wish to see your appointment letter as part of this process.

If you are planning to travel in the next four months it is recommended that you carry this letter with you.

Cancellations

If you are unable to keep this appointment, please let us know as soon as possible and we will arrange another for you.

Location

The Royal Liverpool University Hospital is situated on the edge of the city centre

Transport

The Royal Liverpool Hospital is well served by public transport. Patients and visitors who are able to do so may wish to consider using public transport. For details of routes, services and times please contact the Merseytravel line on Tel: 0151 236 7676.

Parking for patients and visitors is available at the Q-park multi-storey car park. It is located almost opposite the main hospital entrance. The entrance by car is on Epworth Street off Erskine Street.

The car park is open 24 hours a day seven days a week.

Please take your ticket with you when you leave your car. Payment is made when you return to your car at the machines within the car park. Your ticket is inserted into the exit barrier as you leave the car park. The car park is continually monitored by parking hosts and CCTV.

There are ten spaces for the disabled on the entry level of the car park. If you need help, please speak with the parking hosts at the car park entrance.

If you normally require an ambulance when you attend hospital please contact the department as soon as possible.

Further information

If you have any further questions, or require further information, please contact:

Department of Nuclear Medicine

Tel 0151 706 4464

Ward 5Y

Tel 0151 706 2456 / 2458

Author: Nuclear Medicine

Review date: December 2013

All Trust approved information is available on request in alternative formats, including other languages, easy read, large print, audio, Braille, moon and electronically.

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