

# Thyroid I-131 Treatment for Hyperthyroidism

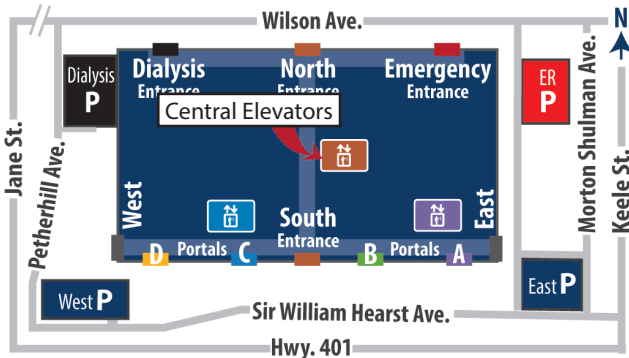
## Appointment Information

You have an appointment for a **Thyroid I-131 Treatment**. Please read this handout for information on how to prepare for your visit.

### Location:

Medical Imaging - Nuclear Medicine  
Humber River Health  
1235 Wilson Ave., Toronto, ON M3M 0B2

We are located on the main floor (level 1), behind the Central Elevators. Follow the signs to Nuclear Medicine Registration.



**Arriving by car (or Wheel-Trans):** Use the South Entrance.

**Arriving by TTC:** Use the North Entrance.

### Bring to the hospital:

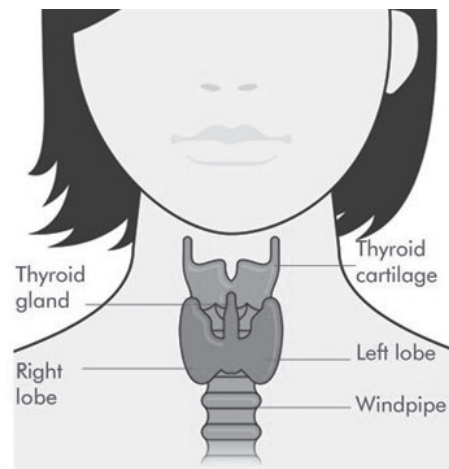
- Your health card (OHIP) and photo ID.
- All the medicines you are currently taking, including over-the-counter medicines, herbals and supplements, in their original containers.

**Do not** bring jewelry or other valuables.

## What is thyroid I-131 treatment?

**Thyroid I-131 treatment** is a form of radiation used to treat thyroid conditions, such as an overactive thyroid gland or thyroid nodules. The treatment comes as a small capsule containing radioactive iodine.

After you swallow the capsule, your thyroid gland will pick up the iodine. As the iodine gathers in the thyroid, it will give off radiation. This will decrease the function of the thyroid.



The thyroid gland. Figure courtesy of Macmillan Cancer Support. Reprinted with permission.

**For more information on overactive thyroid conditions or this treatment, visit:**

My Thyroid.com  
<http://www.mythyroid.com>

**If you have questions about your appointment, please contact:**

Medical Imaging - Nuclear Medicine,  
Humber River Health  
Tel: (416) 242-1000 ext. 63823  
Monday to Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

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## How do I prepare for the treatment?

### TELL YOUR DOCTOR IF YOU:

- Are pregnant or think you may be pregnant.
  - You and your doctor will discuss the safety issues of having the treatment at this time. You may also have to have a pregnancy test on the day of the treatment.
- Are planning to become pregnant.
  - Please talk to your doctor. You will need to use effective birth control methods for at least 6 months after your treatment.
- Are breastfeeding.
  - STOP breastfeeding at least 6 weeks before the treatment.
  - DO NOT resume breastfeeding your current child as you may permanently damage their thyroid gland. Breastfeeding is safe for any babies you may have in the future.
- Are taking your thyroid medicines.
  - Your doctor will let you know when to stop and how to follow a 2-week low iodine diet.
- Have had a test that used contrast dye within the last 6 weeks.
- Have any allergies, especially to any medicine.
  - Share this information with your healthcare team and wear your MedicAlert® bracelet on the day of your treatment.

## What can I expect on the day of the treatment?

### BEFORE THE TREATMENT:

- DO NOT eat or drink for 2 hours before the treatment.

### DURING THE TREATMENT:

- If you need support, you may have someone with you during the treatment. Please do not bring young children or pregnant women.
- The technologist will take you into a special room where you will swallow the capsule with water.

### AFTER THE TREATMENT:

- You may be able to go home soon after you have taken the capsule.
- Drive home alone. If this is not possible, choose a seat that keeps as much distance as possible between you and other passengers.
- Do not eat or drink for 1 hour after treatment. After 1 hour, you may resume your regular diet.

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## What are the side effects from this treatment?

**Common side effects** from the treatment include:

- Nausea
- Upset stomach
- Neck tenderness.

**Less common side effects** include:

- Vomiting
- Thyroid storm (when your thyroid gland suddenly releases large amounts of thyroid hormone in a short time).

Most of these side effects can last from a few days to a couple of weeks.

## Are there any risks associated with this treatment?

There is a low risk from the radioactive iodine capsule. Your body is able to get rid of the radioactive iodine within several days. The radioactive iodine will stay in the thyroid gland. During the first few days after treatment, your body will get rid of any radioactive iodine that your thyroid does not collect. This is mainly through urine, but your saliva, sweat, and bowel movements may also have very small amounts.

This treatment is safe and effective for you, but others who stay close to you for long periods may be exposed to unnecessary radiation. They may also come in contact with small amounts of radioactive iodine from your urine, saliva, or sweat.

## How do I keep everyone safe while my body gets rid of the radioactive iodine?



You must follow the safety measures listed below and on the following page to limit the radiation your body and bodily fluids can give off to others.

If you will not be able to follow all of these safety measures, let your doctor know.

### FOR THE FIRST 5 DAYS:

- Limit others' exposure to unnecessary radiation:
  - » Keep at least 2 meters (6 feet) away from all people (especially pregnant women and children under 18 years of age, as they are more sensitive to radiation) and pets.
  - » Arrange for others to provide childcare for infants and young children.
  - » Sleep alone.
  - » Do not kiss. Avoid sex and other physical contact.
  - » Avoid activities where you may be close to others for more than 5 minutes, such as in movie theaters, sporting events, and public transportation.
- Eating and Drinking:
  - » Drink plenty of fluids to help flush away the extra radioactive iodine.
  - » Do not chew gum.

Continued on next page. Please turn over.



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## How do I keep everyone safe while my body gets rid of the radioactive iodine? (continued)



### FOR THE FIRST 5 DAYS (CONTINUED):

- Preparing Food:
  - » Use separate tableware (plates, cups, glasses, cutlery). Wash them separately from others.
  - » Do not prepare food for others.
- Personal Hygiene:
  - » Empty your bladder often. Sit on the toilet when peeing to avoid splashing. Wipe any spills. Flush the toilet 2 times.
  - » If you can, use a separate washroom in your home.
  - » Shower every day, especially for the first 2 days. Rinse the shower/tub after every use.
  - » Wash your hands with soap and water thoroughly and rinse the sink after every use.
  - » When brushing your teeth, spit directly into the sink or toilet. Rinse thoroughly and wipe any spills.
- Clothing, Bedding, and Towels:
  - » DO NOT share towels or washcloths.
  - » Wash your towels, bed linens, underwear, and other potentially contaminated clothing separately.
  - » Wear slippers, or shoes and socks when walking around.

**FOR THE FIRST 3 MONTHS:** Small amounts of the radioactive iodine from your thyroid may set off radiation monitors at airports, border crossings, and waste disposal sites. If you will be in these areas (or travelling outside of Canada) in the near future, tell your doctor or technologist. They may provide a letter describing your treatment.