

Thyroid I-131 Treatment for Thyroid Cancer

Appointment Information



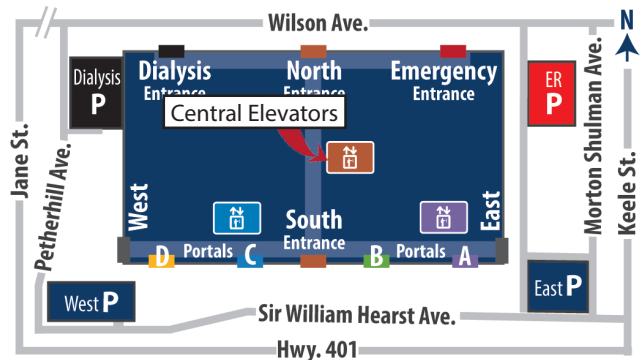
You will be in the hospital for 1 to 3 days receiving **thyroid I-131 to treat thyroid cancer**. Please read this handout for information on how to prepare for your treatment and hospital stay.

Location: Level 13 West
Humber River Health
1235 Wilson Ave., Toronto, ON M3M 0B2

Take the Central Elevators to level 13.
Register at the 13 West nursing station.

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.
- Items that you need but can throw away after your treatment, such as:
 - Just enough toothpaste and soap. After your treatment, you will also have to throw out the toothbrush and hairbrush or comb that you bring.
 - Enough of your regular medicines, if you are taking any.
 - Old socks or old slippers to wear during your treatment. The hospital can provide you with disposable booties to wear, if needed.
 - If you want to read during your stay, bring magazines that you can leave behind.
- Clothes that you will wear when you go home.
- Hard sour candies to suck on during your stay. You may also bring bottled water and snacks to eat the day after you receive the radioactive iodine. Do not bring chewing gum.
- A telephone and TV is available in your hospital room. If you wish to use your own electronic devices, bring gloves to wear or put them in a plastic bag while you use them.

Do not bring jewelry or other valuables.



What is a thyroid I-131 treatment?

Thyroid I-131 treatment is a form of radiation used to treat thyroid conditions such as thyroid cancer. The treatment comes as a small capsule containing radioactive iodine.

After you swallow the capsule, your thyroid gland tissue will pick up the iodine. As the iodine gathers in the thyroid tissue, it will give off radiation. This will destroy thyroid cancer cells and any remaining normal thyroid cells.

For more information on thyroid cancer or this treatment, visit: www.thyroidcancercanada.org.

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 a 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.

What can I expect on the day of the treatment?

ON THE MORNING OF YOUR TREATMENT:

- DO NOT eat or drink for 2 hours before the treatment.
- Take your medicine as your doctor advised.

AT THE HOSPITAL:

Please go to the 13 West nursing station to register.

- A nurse will show you to your room. Your room will have a radiation warning sign posted on the outside of the door. The contact surfaces in your room will be covered with plastic wrap and absorbent paper to help with room clean up.
- Your nurse will assess you. They will also provide you with the telephone numbers for the nursing station and your nurse.
- A nuclear medicine technologist will prepare you for your treatment before the doctor arrives.
- The doctor will review the treatment with you and answer any of your questions.
- The technologist will bring the radioactive iodine capsule in a lead container to your room. You will then swallow the capsule with water.

AFTER SWALLOWING THE CAPSULE:

- Wait 1 hour before eating or drinking. After this time, you may resume your regular diet and start to drink plenty of fluids and emptying your bladder often.
- Wait 2 hours before sucking on the sour candies (if available).

How will I feel during the treatment?

Most patients do not feel anything unusual.

You may experience:

- Mild neck and jaw swelling or soreness.
- Some nausea or a change in the taste of food.
Your nurse will be able to give you medicines to help with nausea and pain. It is important to treat the nausea to prevent vomiting as this can affect your treatment.

Other less common side effects include:

- Vomiting
- Swollen salivary glands
- Face swelling
- Dry eyes, and
- Dry mouth.

Most of these side effects can last from a few days to a couple of weeks. Call your nurse if you vomit or are worried about any symptom.

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

As the treatment starts working, your body will slowly get rid of the radioactive iodine through body fluids such as your urine, bowel movements, saliva, and sweat.

Your nurse will check on you often to see how you are doing, but for safety reasons, they will spend very little time in your room after you have started your treatment. If you have any questions or concerns, or need things like another hospital gown, more towels, or more ice water, do not hesitate to call your nurse.

Family and friends will not be able to visit you in person during your treatment and hospital stay. Please let them know they can call you by phone.



To keep you safe and reduce the spread of radiation, **follow these instructions DURING YOUR ENTIRE STAY:**

- **Do not leave your room**, except if there is an emergency.
- Wear a hospital gown.
- Wear old socks/slippers or hospital booties when out of bed. Walk only on the covered floor areas.
- Wash your hands often.
- Sit when urinating to avoid splashing outside the toilet.
- It is important to have regular bowel movements. Let your nurse know if you have not had a bowel movement within the first 24 hours after swallowing the capsule.
- Flush toilet 2 to 3 times after each use.
- All the items that you have brought or staff bring into your room must stay in the room.
 - » You will receive your meals on disposable dishes. Put empty dishes in the dedicated waste bin when you are done. Leave any reusable items aside in the room.
 - » Put all soiled linen in the dedicated linen bin.
 - » Put all solid waste in the dedicated waste bin.
 - » Flush liquids down the toilet or pour them down the washroom sink. Do not pour any liquid into the waste bin.

**The telephone number for this room is
(416) 242-1000 ext. 31314**

When can I go home?

You may be in the hospital for 1 to 3 days, depending on how quickly your body gets rid of the radioactive iodine. The nuclear medicine technologist or radiation safety officer will check your radiation level during your treatment. When the radiation level is low enough to be safe, you will be ready to go home.



To keep you safe and reduce the spread of radiation after you leave the hospital, follow these instructions FOR 7 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.
 - » When traveling home from the hospital, sit as far from others as you can. For example, sit opposite the driver in the back seat.
 - » 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.
- Clothing, bedding, and towels:
 - » DO NOT share towels or wash cloths.
 - » Wash your towels, bed linens, underwear, and potentially contaminated clothing separately.
 - » Wear slippers, or shoes and socks when walking around.
- Preparing Food:
 - » Use separate tableware (plates, cups, glasses, cutlery). Wash them separately from others.
 - » Do not prepare food for others.
- Eating and Drinking:
 - » Drink plenty of fluids to help flush away the extra radioactive iodine and prevent constipation.
 - » Do not chew gum.
- 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 from surfaces.

FOLLOW UP APPOINTMENT: We will give you an appointment to return to the hospital for a whole body scan. This appointment is usually about 7 days after your treatment.

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English: This information is important! If you have trouble reading this, ask someone to help you.

Italian: Queste informazioni sono importanti! Se ha difficoltà a leggere questo, chiedi aiuto a qualcuno.

Spanish: ¡Esta información es importante! Si tiene dificultad en leer esto, pida que alguien le ayude.