
Self isolating guidance for patients having radioiodine treatment (400MBq)

Why am I being asked to self isolate?

You are required to self isolate for **14 days prior to your radioiodine treatment** in order to minimise your risk of contracting COVID-19 during this time. The Endocrine department will arrange for you to have a COVID swab 2 days before your treatment; this must be negative in order for your treatment to proceed.

You are also required to self isolate for **7 days after your radioiodine treatment** in order to minimise the risk of contracting COVID-19 whilst there is still a large amount of radioactivity in your body. A small proportion of people with COVID-19 may become very unwell and require admission to hospital. It is very important that people who have received radioactive iodine do not develop severe COVID-19 in the days after treatment, as nursing someone who is both radioactive and highly contagious would be extremely challenging.

In addition to self isolating, **you must follow the radiation protection precautions** described in the information sheet "*Information for patients having radioiodine treatment (400MBq)*". These precautions will continue beyond your 7 day self isolation period following your treatment. Nuclear Medicine Physics staff will contact you prior to your treatment to discuss self isolating, as well as the radiation protection precautions required following your treatment.

If you have any questions about your radioiodine treatment, please contact Medical Physics at the Western General Hospital on **0131 537 2155**.

Stay at home

Whilst you are self isolating, you must remain at home. Do not go to work, school, or public areas, and do not use public transport or taxis.

You should not go out even to buy food or other essentials, and any exercise must be taken within your home or garden if you have one.

If you require help with buying groceries, other shopping or picking up medication, or walking a dog, you should ask friends or family. Alternatively, you can order your shopping online and medication by phone or online. Delivery drivers should not come into your home, so make sure you ask them to leave items outside for collection.

Avoid contact with other members of your household as much as possible

You should stay in a well-ventilated room with a window to the outside that can be opened, separate from other people in your home if this is possible. Keep the door closed.

Use a separate bathroom from the rest of the household, if available. If you have to share these facilities, they must be cleaned thoroughly after each person has used them. You should use separate towels from other household members, both for drying yourself after bathing or showering and for hand hygiene purposes.

You should avoid using shared spaces such as kitchens whilst others are present. Take your meals back to your room to eat. Clean and dry your used crockery and cutlery by hand after each use and avoid sharing utensils with other members of your household.

We are aware that not all these measures will be possible for you, or those you are living with. If it is not possible for you to avoid contact with other members of your household when you are self isolating, we may ask them to self isolate with you and follow the same guidance. Nuclear Medicine Physics staff will contact you prior to your treatment to discuss self isolating, as well as the radiation protection precautions required following your treatment.

What do I do if experience COVID-19 symptoms when I am self isolating?

It is vitally important that you inform us immediately if you have any symptoms that could be related to COVID-19 prior to your treatment, for example a new cough, shortness of breath, headache, temperature, sore throat, loss of taste or loss of smell.

If you experience mild COVID-19 symptoms in the **first 7 days following your treatment** (whilst you are self isolating) please do not arrange to have a COVID test. During this time, the level of radioactivity in your bodily fluids will still be high and must be treated as radioactive. Please contact the Nuclear Medicine Physics department.

If you experience mild COVID-19 symptoms **more than 7 days after your treatment** (whilst you are no longer self isolating but may still be following radiation protection precautions) it may be possible for you to have a COVID test as normal. However, please contact the Nuclear Medicine Physics department prior to this and they will be able to advise further.

If you experience severe COVID-19 symptoms and require hospital treatment any time in the 21 days after your treatment (when you are following some radiation protection precautions) you must inform hospital staff that you have had radioiodine treatment. Show them the card that you will be given so that hospital staff can contact Nuclear Medicine Physics for advice.

After 21 days, all radiation protection precautions will no longer apply and you should follow standard NHS Scotland guidance for testing or treatment for COVID-19 symptoms.