

Seinäjoki Central Hospital

Physiology and Nuclear Medicine Unit

18 February 2026

Radioiodine treatment, thyroid tissue, thyroid ablation treatment

Purpose of the examination

You have been diagnosed with highly differentiated thyroid cancer, and the thyroid tissue remaining after your operation will be destroyed using radioiodine treatment.

Radioiodine that has not been accumulated in the thyroid tissue is excreted from the body in the urine within 1–2 days.

Pregnancy or suspected pregnancy and breast-feeding are grounds for not providing this treatment.

If you cannot manage independently, an escort is necessary.

Preparing for the examination

- Follow your doctor's instructions regarding breaks in and restarting your medication.
 - This treatment is not given to pregnant women, and breastfeeding must be stopped.
 - In the two weeks leading up to the test, avoid foods containing iodine, such as eggs and dairy products, sea fish, shellfish, seaweed products, natural remedies and multivitamin supplements, as well as cough medicines, eye drops and skin care products (e.g. Betadine) that contain iodine.
 - Please let us know if you have recently had any X-ray examinations involving contrast agents.
 - **Do not eat or drink for 4 hours before radioiodine treatment and for 2 hours after it.**
 - You will have your own room equipped with a toilet, telephone, fridge, microwave, coffee maker, TV, newspapers and more. The room also has an internet connection, and you are welcome to bring your own laptop with you. You should also consider bringing things to pass the time, such as magazines, books or craft materials. Smoking is prohibited. Your meal tray and medicines will be brought to you outside the room.
 - Please bring the medicines you use at home with you. (If necessary, you can ask for painkillers or antinauseants from the ward, for example).
 - Bring warm clothes for daytime wear, such as a tracksuit, a cardigan or fleece clothes, and indoor slippers.
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- You can use your mobile phone.
- Do not bring large sums of money, bank cards or valuable jewellery with you, as the hospital will not be liable for their loss.

Performing the examination

The treatment is administered orally in capsule form. After the treatment, you will be kept in an isolation room at the hospital for a maximum of 3 days, and you are not allowed to leave the room without permission. There are no doctor's rounds, and no examinations are carried out. Visitors are not allowed. Before you go home, your radiation levels will be measured. You will be allowed to go home once the radiation level falls below the limit.

Instructions for your stay in hospital

- Most of the iodine absorbed is excreted in your urine, but some is also excreted in sweat and other secretions. After treatment, you should drink more fluids than usual for the first two days. You can also chew chewing gum or suck on lozenges to increase saliva production.
- Due to the radioactive iodine excreted in the urine, good hygiene is important. Always wash your hands after using the toilet, and while you are in hospital, you should flush the toilet 2–3 times to ensure it is properly cleaned.

After the examination

- Your urine is radioactive, so please only use the toilet to urinate. Wash your hands thoroughly after using the toilet and use kitchen roll to dry them. If vomit, urine or any other bodily fluid gets on your clothes or bed linen, rinse them immediately under running water and wash them separately from other laundry.
 - Try to avoid close contact with children and pregnant women for a total of three weeks, and avoid prolonged close contact. The safety distance is two metres. Sleeping arrangements should be made in a separate room if possible.
 - Those working in the childcare sector may need sick leave, depending on their duties.
 - Sexual intercourse is permitted, but pregnancy and conception should be avoided for four months following treatment. Contraception must be used during this period.
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- Avoid journeys lasting more than one hour in a car or on public transport with other passengers. You should also avoid other social occasions (theatre, cinema, visits, etc.) for one week.
- If you plan to travel abroad within 12 weeks of your treatment, please ask for a certificate confirming that you have undergone radioiodine treatment. The sensitive radiation detectors used at the customs may trigger an alarm, in which case the easiest way to clarify the situation is by producing a certificate.

If you have any questions about the examination, please contact the internal medicine outpatient clinic at +358 6 415 4665 or the nuclear medicine unit at +358 6 415 4090.