



Conrad Health-Guard Products Pte Ltd.  
23 Amoy Street, Singapore 069858  
telephone: +65 62238622  
facsimile: +65 62238621  
website: [www.health-guard.net](http://www.health-guard.net)

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(We do not suggest RAI.)

**Little more about Radioactive iodine therapy (radioiodine therapy)**

Radioactive iodine therapy uses radioactive iodine (I-131) to destroy thyroid cancer cells anywhere in the body or to remove or destroy thyroid tissue. The therapy usually is given by mouth in a small dose (either in liquid or capsule form) that people who are allergic to iodine would have no problems. The intestine absorbs the I-131, which flows in the bloodstream and collects in thyroid cells. Thyroid cancer cells remaining in the neck and those that have spread to other parts of the body are killed when they absorb I-131.

**During Treatment:**

If the dose is high, the doctor may isolate the patient during treatment process, in order to protect others from radiation exposure. Most radiation is gone in a few days. Within 3 weeks, only traces of radioactive iodine remain in the body.

Some patients have nausea and vomiting on the first day of I-131 therapy. Thyroid tissue remaining in the neck after surgery may become swollen and painful. If the thyroid cancer has spread to other parts of the body, the I-131 that collects there may cause pain and swelling.

During treatment, patients are encouraged to drink lots of water and fluids. Because fluids help I-131 pass out of the body more quickly so to lower the bladder's exposure to I-131.

**After RAI, do you know about the side effect?**

Patients may have a dry mouth or lose the sense of taste or smell for a short time.

A rare side effect in men who received large doses of I-131 is loss of fertility. In women, I-131 may not cause loss of fertility, but some doctors suggest that women avoid pregnancy for one year after I-131 therapy.

Due to radioactive iodine therapy destroys the cells that make thyroid hormone; patients may need to take thyroid hormone pills to replace the natural hormone.

*Researchers have reported that a very small number of patients may develop leukemia years after treatment with high doses of I-131.*

*Source: thyca.*