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Nuclear Request for Sodium Iodide I-131 Treatment and Patient Release Information

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Sodium Iodide I-131 Patient Release Information Collection; Request for Information

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General Comment

My comments deal with the information that physicians use to make decisions on when it is safe to release I-131 patients based on radiation exposure concerns and radiation safety information used by I-131 patients after their release.

I am one of numerous individuals who have had their thyroid removed due to thyroid cancer (thyca) and as a result, a dosage of I-131 was given to kill off any remaining thyca tissue. The first time I had RAI treatment was in 2001 where I was given 101 millicuries. I was required to remain in the hospital where each day I was told to drink large amounts of liquid to assist the I-131 to leave my body. I was checked daily with a geiger counter then released when the hospital deemed me to be at the State approved level for release. That level was approved after spending 3 days in the hospital.

I underwent a second dosage of 150 millicuries in 2014 and was not required to remain in the hospital. The instructions from the nuclear medicine physician was to isolate myself for 8 days and return to the hospital for the whole body scan. I was checked with a geiger counter on day 8 and was deemed suitable for release from isolation and would be able to be in contact with my family, as well as return to work.

My problem is that 8 days is not enough time for isolation from family, especially young children who are still developing.

At no time did anyone mention the half life of I-131. The CDC states (<http://emergency.cdc.gov/radiation/isotopes/pdf/iodine.pdf>) that the half life of I-131 is 8.06 days. Let's show an example of the half life of a dosage of 100 millicuries:

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Template = ADM - 013
E-RIDS= ADM-03
Add= *D-B Howe (dbh)*

Day 1 - 100 millicuries remains

Day 8 - 50 millicuries remains

Day 16 - 25 millicuries remains

Day 24 - 12.5 millicuries remains, etc.

With 50 millicuries left after 8 days, how can being released from isolation be safe for anyone around me? I decided to protect my family and remained isolated and/or at a 8 foot distance for 30 days. Was it hard? Yes. Was it difficult for my young children to not hug me, yes. But was it the right thing to do for their safety? Absolutely.

The American Thyroid Association (<http://www.thyroid.org/radioactive-iodine/>) doesn't use half-life in their precautions either. They suggest keeping away from children for 1-5 days (depending on the amount of I-131). That is less than the actual half-life of I-131.

What I have found extremely troublesome is the different instructions that are given to patients. I am a member of numerous thyca groups on Facebook and find it disturbing that each patient has a different set of instructions. Some patients are told nothing, while others are told very different things. The purpose of the Facebook groups is to share stories and help each other. We certainly can't help each other when we are all given inconsistent information.

Please also share with the world that thyroid cancer is not the 'good cancer'. So many physicians and medical workers tell this that thyroid cancer is 100% curable and how lucky we are. My doctor 11 years ago told me if I had to get cancer, this is the one you want. I am RAI resistant and there is no other known cure for thyca. When we are told that we have the good cancer, they couldn't be more wrong.

Thank you.