

As of: 2/16/16 3:50 PM
 Received: February 15, 2016
 Status: Pending_Post
 Tracking No. 1k0-8nzb-uyzw
 Comments Due: February 16, 2016
 Submission Type: Web

PUBLIC SUBMISSION

Docket: NRC-2015-0020
 Nuclear Request for Sodium Iodide I-131 Treatment and Patient Release Information

Comment On: NRC-2015-0020-0014
 Sodium Iodide I-131 Patient Release Information Collection; Request for Information

Document: NRC-2015-0020-DRAFT-0030
 Comment on FR Doc # 2015-29027

*11/16/2015
 80 FR 70843*

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2016 FEB 16 PM 3:54

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Submitter Information

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General Comment

I believe putting together a patient information website and brochure is a very worthwhile effort by the NRC. I am a medical physicist and I regularly talk with I-131 patients regarding radiation safety. They are often nervous and confused.

I'm sure you will address the basics of time, distance, and contamination control. Most versions of patient instructions cover those topics, although there can be a lot of discrepancies. I'd like to make some various suggestions based on my involvement with patients.

First off, not all patients are the same. They don't all have the same home situation or the same resources. I don't think you can come up with a one size fits all set of instructions. I would suggest offering what might be considered the "ideal" instructions along with alternate instructions for those that can't follow the ideal. Here's a couple of examples:

In an ideal world, the patient will have their own bathroom following treatment. However, many patients have no choice but to share a bathroom. They should be provided detailed instructions that say something like, "if you have to share a bathroom, you will need to do the following"

In an ideal world, any young children and pregnant women would stay at a friends or a relatives for a few days. However, not all patients can do that, so I hope you will include specific instructions on how to handle these types of situations.

Some of the detailed instructions can get lengthy. It might be beneficial to have the website contain the more in-depth, lengthy instructions, and just have the brochure highlight the basics. That way patients could spend

*SUNSI Review Complete
 Template = ADM-013*

*E-RFDS = ADM-03
 Cell = D-B Howe (dbh)*

time on the website when they need to, but they could use the brochure as a quick reminder. Sometimes I think patients get overloaded with things to remember.

Patients that get sick - Please consider providing basic instructions for patients that get sick while at home. This should include information such as clean up vomit using disposable wipes and flush everything down the toilet, followed by contact your doctor. Also include information for patients that have to go to the emergency room or other doctor's office for non I-131 related issues.

Non-English speaking patients - I'd suggest having versions of the website and brochure in Spanish. It is really frustrating trying to give the radiation safety speech to a non-English speaking patient. Usually I'm connected to a translator over a phone but even when the translator is in the room, it is difficult to develop a high level of confidence that the patient understands the directions they are being given.

Pets - I don't think I've ever seen this addressed in patient instructions (HPS does have it in their Ask the Expert section), but it seems to come up with about 5% of the patients. They want to know if there are any special concerns with their pets. I don't know the answer to this. Originally I believed there wouldn't be an issue, but then I learned that cats have thyroids and that their thyroid conditions are often treated with I-131, so that made me concerned. Also, some cats tend to curl up on their owners chests and neck areas. This could lead to some pretty high exposure levels. What about other animals besides cats? I hope you will address this.

Sometimes I get questions from patients because they read something on the internet, or they spoke with a friend that was treated and the friend was told to do something. Maybe you could address some of these in a FAQ section on the website. I'm sure other people can add to this, but here a few of the kinds of questions I'm talking about.

Should I cover my chair in plastic?

Should I cover my mattress in plastic?

Should I wash my sheets and towels separately?

Should I wash my clothes separately?

Should I put my tv remote and phone in a plastic bag?

Should I wear gloves when I use my I-pad?

What if my kid uses my I-pad after me?

Should I wear a mask so I don't breathe on someone?

Can I exercise?

Should I use disposable plates and utensils?

Do I need to store my trash in the garage for a month?

Thank you.