Information Leaflet

Potassium Iodide Tablets
Why Have These Tablets Been Issued?
A situation has occurred in which there is a risk of exposure to radioactive iodine in the air, which may be harmful. Each tablet contains 65mg of potassium iodide, which will release 50mg of non-radioactive iodine into your body. This will prevent your body taking up the radioactive iodine, protecting you from its effects.

Who Should Take The Tablets?
Everyone, except those who have been told by their doctor that:

- they are sensitive to oral iodine, OR
- they suffer from severe renal failure (kidney failure restricted by diet) OR
- they suffer the very rare medical conditions of dermatitis herpetiformis or hypocomplementaemic vasculitis

If you do not know if you have these medical conditions, then you SHOULD take the potassium iodide tablets as there is no alternative treatment.

It is very important that children, and women who are pregnant or breastfeeding take these tablets.

This is because the foetus and young children are particularly sensitive to the effects of radioactive iodine.
How Many Tablets Should I Take?

The number depends on age as follows:

- **New-born babies**  
  (birth to under one month)  
  quarter tablet

- **Young children**  
  (one month to under three years)  
  half tablet

- **Older children**  
  (three years to twelve years)  
  one tablet

- **Adults**  
  (including children over twelve years)  
  two tablets

How Should I Take The Tablets?

For babies, crush the quarter tablet and then dissolve it in a small quantity of milk or juice – shake well to make sure the powder dissolves. For young children, crush the half tablet and mix with a teaspoon of e.g. jam, honey or yoghurt. For older children, crush one tablet and mix with a teaspoon of e.g. jam, honey or yoghurt. For adults, swallow the two tablets with water; if this is difficult, crush tablets as for children.

When Should I Take The Tablets?

As soon as you have finished reading this leaflet. You will probably only need to take one dose to be protected. Further information will be communicated if there is a risk of prolonged exposure requiring some people to take another dose.
What Are The Side Effects?
When these tablets were given to very large numbers of people in Russia and Poland following the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power station in 1986, very few people suffered any side effects. The most common one was feeling sick for a while.

Should I See A Doctor Afterwards?
Most people will not need to see their doctor after taking the tablets. However, if you have to see your doctor for other reasons, you should tell him/her that you have taken potassium iodide tablets.

If you have a baby under three months old, you should make an appointment to see your doctor. This is because it is important for a doctor to check the thyroid hormone levels of young babies following the taking of one quarter of a potassium iodide tablet.

If you are in the last three months of your pregnancy, you should make an appointment to see your doctor. This is because umbilical cord blood samples should be taken at birth for the baby’s thyroid hormone measurement, if you have taken potassium iodide tablets in the last three months of pregnancy.

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Public Health England
Wellington House
133-155 Waterloo Road
London SE1 8UG
www.gov.uk/phe

Twitter: @PHE_uk
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