

POTASSIUM IODIDE INFORMATION SHEET

KEEP THIS SHEET WITH YOUR TABLETS

What is it? Potassium Iodide (KI) is an over-the-counter (OTC) medication that can protect one gland in the body—the thyroid—if a person is exposed to radioactive iodine released during a nuclear power plant emergency.

How does it work? KI fills the thyroid with stable iodine so it cannot absorb radioactive iodine. Taking KI (before or shortly after exposure to radioactive iodine), protects the thyroid from damage by radioactive iodine.

How much should be taken? The dose depends on a person's age. The table below shows the doses recommended by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Take one dose (according to the table below) per 24-hour period. To divide the tablets into 1/2, 1/4, or 1/8 portions, use a pill cutter or a sharp knife on a hard surface. Crush the appropriate dose for infants and small children into a powder and mix with applesauce, pudding or something else the child likes.

Age Group	KI dose (mg)	# of 130 mg tablets	# of 65 mg tablets
Adults over 18	130	1	2
Children over 3 yrs through 18 yrs*	65	1/2	1
Over 1 month through 3 years	32	1/4	1/2
Birth through 1 month	16	1/8	1/4

*Adolescents approaching adult size (> 70 kg) should receive the full adult dose (130 mg).

Is it safe to take KI? The FDA has determined that KI is safe for most people. Some people may have mild side effects such as nausea, GI upset, and skin rash. Pregnant women and newborns should not receive more than one dose of KI and should be checked by their doctor soon after taking KI to make sure thyroid function remains normal.

Who should not take KI? People who are allergic to iodine or who have the rare disorders dermatitis herpetiformis or hypocomplementemic vasculitis. Anyone who is not sure if they can take KI should check with their doctor.

When should KI be taken? If a nuclear power plant emergency occurs, the Emergency Alert System and the media (radio and TV) will notify the public of protective actions that should be taken. These instructions may include instructions to evacuate the area, stay inside, and/or take KI. Public health officials will let you know if you need to take KI.

DO NOT TAKE KI UNLESS PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIALS TELL YOU TO TAKE IT.

Where should KI be stored? Keep KI in a dry place at room temperature. As with other medicines, KI tablets should be stored where children cannot reach them. Keep this information with the KI.

**Remember...Taking KI is not a substitute for evacuation.
Leave the area immediately if you are instructed to do so.**

KI will only protect the thyroid from radioactive iodine. If there is a nuclear power plant emergency near you, you must protect your whole body from penetrating radiation and other radioactive materials besides radioactive iodine.

For more information about KI, go to <http://www.epi.state.nc.us/epi/phpr/ki/ki.html>.



Information sheet prepared by Division of Public Health, North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services in partnership with your county health department. (Revised 12/1/2009)

