

POTASSIUM IODIDE (KI) FACT SHEET

What is potassium iodide (KI)?

It is a salt of iodine tablet, which helps prevent the human thyroid gland from absorbing radioactive iodine.

When to take KI?

Your local emergency management officials inform you when to take KI.

How much should you and your child take?

KI comes in a tablet form of 130 mg. A one-time dose at the levels recommended in this fact sheet is usually all that is required. A child from 3 to 18 years of age should take one-half of a 130 mg tablet (65mg). A child from 1 month to 3 years of age should take one-fourth of a 130 mg tablet. An infant from birth to 1 month of age should be given one-eighth of a 130 mg tablet; this tablet should be crushed finely and mixed with water, baby formula or breast milk and given to the baby in a bottle. If you are breastfeeding, you should take the adult dose, and your infant should receive the recommended infant dose. A child who is approaching adult size (> to 150 pounds) should take the adult dose.

How long should you take KI?

A single dose of KI protects the thyroid gland for 24 hours. A one-time dose at the levels recommended in this fact sheet is usually all that is needed to give full protection to the thyroid gland. In some cases, radioactive iodine might be in the environment for more than 24 hours. If that happens, your public health official may tell you to take *one* dose of KI every 24 hours for a few days. You should do this only on the advice of your public health official. Avoid repeat dosing with KI of pregnant and breastfeeding women and newborn infants. Those individuals may need to be evacuated until levels of radioactive iodine in the environment fall.

Taking a higher dose of KI, or taking KI more often than recommended, does not offer more protection and can cause severe illness or death.

Who should not take KI?

If you are diagnosed with a thyroid disease, allergic to iodine (if allergic to shellfish, ask your doctor or pharmacist about taking KI) and/or if you have certain skin disorders. **If you feel you have been exposed to this agent, call 911 for medical attention right away. Do not drive yourself to the hospital as you may become very ill on your way.**

Why is iodine important to the thyroid?

The thyroid gland takes iodine from the bloodstream and uses it to make thyroid hormones. Without the required amounts of iodine, the thyroid will not be able to make these hormones.

Where you can get more information on KI?

www.bt.cdc.gov/radiation/index.asp

www.epa.gov/

www.dshs.state.tx.us

The U.S. National Response Team's Web site is available at <http://www.nrt.org>

Source of Information

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)