

Informed consent for issuing potassium iodine tablets in child care and education facilities

Dear parents and guardians!

Ensuring there is a stock of potassium iodine tablets is an important measure of precaution to protect your child from thyroid cancer in case there is a major incident at a nuclear plant.

You can get a private stock of these tablets for your child/children for free at any pharmacy or from your family doctor, if he/she has an in-house pharmacy. This way you can protect your child/children effectively if the health authorities issue a request to take the tablets after a nuclear disaster.

However, if your child happens to be in the kindergarten, day-care centre or children's home at the time an alarm is issued concerning an incident in a nuclear plant, your child can get the first daily dose there. These institutions will have the necessary tablets ready for your child.

In case of a catastrophic event, children will be given the tablets strictly according to the instructions of the health authorities and your prior consent.

If the facility has your consent it can provide your child with the first daily dose of potassium iodine tablets in the kindergarten, day-care centre or the children's home. In children's homes the administration of tablets can continue for several days if the health authorities should issue such a request following a catastrophe. The consent is valid for the whole time your child attends said facilities.

Please read the enclosed leaflet carefully before giving your consent!

Respectfully,

The administration

INFORMED CONSENT FOR ISSUING POTASSIUM IODINE TABLETS IN CHILD CARE AND EDUCATION FACILITIES

Name of the child.....

Date of birth

Name of the parent/guardian

Please mark as appropriate

YES, I give my consent in accordance with the enclosed leaflet for parents and guardians that my child can be given potassium iodine tablets in case of a catastrophic event – if the health authorities issue such a request – and I confirm that, as far as I know, my child doesn't have any intolerances or contraindications to taking potassium iodine tablets.

NO, I do not give my consent.

.....
Date

.....
Signature
Parent or guardian

Leaflet for parents and guardians

Issuing potassium iodine tablets after an incident in a nuclear plant

Why should one take potassium iodine tablets?

Current knowledge shows us that the Chernobyl reactor catastrophe led to a dramatic increase in thyroid cancer in children in Belarus, Ukraine and parts of Russia. In highly exposed regions it was determined that the frequency of this type of cancer was multiple times higher than usual. Radioactive iodine can be released in large quantities after a major reactor incident and if the nuclear plants are located close to the border or the weather conditions are unfavourable they can reach us as well.

Potassium iodine tablets, if taken early enough, offer an effective protection against absorption of radioactive iodine in the thyroid and thereby against thyroid cancer. So, stocking these tablets represents an important radiation protection measure.

There will be other radiation protection measures in place against radiation by other radioactive substances.

When should one take potassium iodine tablets?

TABLETS MAY BE ADMINISTERED OR TAKEN AFTER A CATASTROPHE ONLY IF THE HEALTH AUTHORITIES ISSUE EXPLICIT INSTRUCTIONS.

Such public instructions are only to be expected if

- a major nuclear incident happens close to the border, with a large-scale release of radioactive iodine **and**
- because of the weather conditions we can assume that massive quantities of radioactive iodine will reach Austria.

Instructions may also be issued during your child's stay in the kindergarten, day-care centre or children's home.

In that case it is important for your child's protection that he/she is administered the first daily dose rapidly in the kindergarten, day-care centre or children's home. Therefore, the facilities keep the first daily dose of potassium iodine ready for your child. For children in children's homes there is a whole individual box with 10 tablets in it.

In order for the kindergarten, day-care centre or children's home to be allowed to administer the potassium iodine tablets to your child it needs to have your informed consent.

The following procedure is planned in case of a disaster:

- WARNING BY SIRENS OR LOUD SPEAKER VANS IF THE MESSAGE OF DANGER IS DELIVERED WITH DELAY
- SWITCH ON RADIO/TV
- POTASSIUM IODINE TABLETS MAY ONLY BE ADMINISTERED TO CHILDREN FOR WHOM THE FACILITY HAS A CONSENT AND ONLY AFTER THE AUTHORITIES ISSUE EXPLICIT INSTRUCTIONS TO DO SO
- WAIT FOR AND FOLLOW OFFICIAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR FURTHER ACTION

Who should take potassium iodine tablets?

Experience after Chernobyl and scientific findings so far have shown that children and young people are especially at risk of thyroid cancer caused by a large-scale release of radioactive iodine.

Therefore, the public stocking campaign is specially aimed at children and young people as the target group.

How are the tablets to be administered and taken (daily dosage)?

The tablets or parts of the tablets are to be crushed and taken with some water, maybe even with a small meal. 1 tablet contains 65 mg of potassium iodine; tablets can be broken in halves or quarters if needed.

Dosage

Newborns (1 st month of life)	¼ tablet one time only
Small children (2 nd month up to 3 years)	½ tablet per day
Children from 3 up to 12 years of age	1 tablet per day
Adolescents from 12 up to 18 years of age	2 tablets per day
Pregnant and nursing women	2 tablets one time only
Persons from 18 up to 40 years of age	2 tablets one time only

Contraindications

In case of doubt, please contact and ask your doctor!

Potassium iodine 65mg tablets must not be taken if the person has:

- known hypersensitivity to iodine such as e.g. ioderma tuberosum (deep red, round, spongy-soft skin changes with ulcer-like incrustated surface)
- known hypersensitivity to any other component of the product
- earlier or present diseases of the thyroid gland (e.g. hyperthyreosis)
- dermatitis herpetiformis (chronic recurring skin disease with herpes-like blistering, rash and burning itching)
- hypocomplementaemic vasculitis (inflamed blood vessels caused by an allergic reaction)

Also, please inform the administration of the kindergarten, day-care centre or children´s home immediately about any changes regarding existing contraindications.

Special warnings

Special caution is necessary for persons with

- bronchial asthma
- heart failure
- kidney dysfunction
- autoimmune diseases.

In these cases, please ask your doctor whether it´s appropriate to administer potassium iodine tablets to your child. Your doctor will carry out or arrange necessary examinations and discuss the possibility of taking tablets beforehand. Please note that in such cases it might be necessary to do follow-up examinations after your child takes the tablets, about which you should also talk to your doctor.

Side effects

Immediately after taking potassium iodine tablets the gastric mucous membrane may be slightly irritated if the tablets are taken on an empty stomach. The tablets should therefore be dissolved in some liquid or taken with a snack.

Several hours after taking potassium iodine tablets hypersensitivity reactions may occur, particularly: skin redness, temporary face redness, deterioration of existing skin diseases, iodine acne, inflammation of the gums, conjunctiva or the nasal mucous membrane (runny nose), increased production of mucous in the bronchia.

Potassium iodine can cause thyroid gland diseases. Should your child have an increased heart rate or outbreaks of sweating in several days to weeks after taking potassium iodine tablets, please consult your doctor.

After the nuclear disaster in Chernobyl iodine products were administered to more than 10 million children and more than 6 million adults in Poland. The side effects observed were mild and temporary.

In case of doubt please keep in touch with your doctor. Should your child be diagnosed with any of the above mentioned diseases or intolerances, please inform the administration of the kindergarten, day-care centre or children´s home immediately.

If side-effects appear, one must seek medical advice.