This pamphlet is for you – the patient – who will be treated with radiiodine, a radioactive form of iodine. It includes special instructions for you to follow when you go home after your treatment.

**Why will you receive radiiodine treatment?**
You will receive radiiodine because you and your doctor have agreed that it is the most appropriate treatment for your thyroid condition. Most of the radiation from the radiiodine will be absorbed by your thyroid gland and will interfere with the function of the thyroid cells. This is the desired and beneficial medical effect of the treatment. However, some of the radiation will leave your body and individuals who are in close physical contact with you may be exposed to very small amounts. There is no evidence that such exposure has ever caused any harm. Nevertheless, efforts should always be made to avoid unnecessary exposure to radiation.

**Ask your doctor**
The best source of additional information on your treatment is your doctor. This pamphlet lists guidelines for you to follow for a short time immediately after your treatment (typically 2 days, depending on your treatment and your doctor’s instructions). Remember, these are guidelines to help you make informed decisions as you discuss your questions and concerns with your doctor.

**How does radiiodine work?**
The thyroid gland absorbs the iodine that enters the body in food and uses this iodine to perform its normal function which is to make thyroid hormone. Radiiodine is similarly collected by the thyroid gland. The radiation given off by this form of radiiodine will shut down some of the cells in the thyroid gland and inhibit their ability to grow. Radiiodine treatment is a common, well accepted form of treatment that has been used all over the world for more than 40 years. Most of the radiation from the radiiodine will be received by your thyroid gland. However, the other tissues in you body will receive some incidental radiation. This small amount of radiation has not shown to produce any adverse effect.

**How long does the radiiodine stay in your body?**
The radiiodine from your treatment will remain in your body only temporarily. Most of the radiiodine not collected by your thyroid gland will be eliminated during the first few days after your treatment. Radiiodine leaves your body primarily through your urine, but very small amounts may leave through your saliva, sweat, and feces. The amount of radiiodine remaining in your thyroid tissue will produce the desired medical effect. However, this amount also decreases rapidly. This means that the possibility of radiation exposure to you and others is reduced with the passage of time. At the end of treatment no radiiodine remains in your body.

**How can others be exposed to radiation from the radiiodine given to you?**
Exposure to radiation from the radiiodine in your body may occur if other people remain very close to you for long periods of time. The radiation received is very similar to the radiation from medical and dental X-rays, which are the most common and familiar sources of external radiation exposure. Contamination with radiiodine can occur if it is deposited in any place where other people may have contact with it. For instance, if some of the radiiodine in your saliva gets on the bathroom sink as you brush your teeth and then on to someone’s hand, contamination has occurred. If this radiiodine is then taken into someone’s body from the hands or from food that has been touched, it will cause a small amount of radiation exposure to that person. Radiiodine disappears by itself as part of the physical processes that make it radioactive. For example, it will
not remain on the sink indefinitely because its quantity is reduced by one-half every 8 days. This is what is meant when it is said that the “Half-life” of radioiodine is 8 days.

**How can you reduce radiation exposure to others?**
The amount of radioiodine in your body during the treatment is small. Although there is no evidence that the radiation from this amount of radioiodine will cause any problems it make sense to take steps to minimize exposure no matter how small. If you take a few simple precautions for a few days after your treatment (as noted in this pamphlet) you can reduce or eliminate the possibility of radiation exposure to others.

There are three basic principles to remember:

1. **Distance** – The greater the distance you are from others, the less radiation they will receive. Even an increase in distance of a few feet will greatly reduce the exposure. Therefore, try to maximize the distance between you and others whenever possible.

2. **Time** – Radiation exposure to others depends on how long you remain close to them. You should try to minimize the time spent in close contact with others.

3. **Hygiene** – Good hygiene minimizes the possibility that other people will be contaminated with the radioiodine that leaves your body. Since most of the radioiodine leaves your body through your urine, good toilet hygiene and thorough washing of your hands will reduce the possibility of contamination.

**Important guidelines to help you apply these basic principles:**
The instructions in this pamphlet will assist in reducing the radiation exposure to others. In addition to the instructions, please make note of the following: **All patients of child bearing age must undergo a serum pregnancy test prior to receiving radioactive iodine therapy.** If you are pregnant (or think you could be) tell your doctor, as radioiodine treatment should not be given during pregnancy. Also, if you are planning to become pregnant, ask your doctor how long you should wait after treatment before conceiving.
INSTRUCTIONS FOR OUTPATIENT TREATMENT WITH IODINE-131

Patient __________________ was administered _____ mCi of I-131 on _____________.

The radioiodine dose that you will receive will be beneficial to you, but other persons with whom you may come in contact should not be unnecessarily exposed to radiation. If you are currently nursing an infant, additional instructions will be given to you concerning the need to interrupt or discontinue breast feeding. Below are some actions to which you must agree to help keep exposures to others as low as possible. The instructions should be followed for 2 days immediately following the treatment.

1. Go straight home.
2. Sleep alone.
3. Keep other family members informed.
4. Use a separate bath/shower if possible. If it is not possible to use a separate bath/shower, clean with detergent after use.
5. Keep the toilet especially clean by flushing twice after use. Men should sit during urination. Wash thoroughly after using toilet. Maintain proper personal hygiene to minimize potential for contamination.
6. Use separate personal items such as towels, toothbrushes, etc.
7. Avoid prolonged contact with other people.
8. Maintain a prudent distance from your spouse or primary caregiver as much as possible (e.g. > 1 meter or approximately 3 feet).
9. Maintain a greater distance from other people as much as possible (e.g. > 3 meters or approximately 10 feet).
10. Avoid being in the room with pregnant women or children under the age of 18 years.
11. Do not hug, kiss, or have sexual intercourse with your partner.
12. If you are preparing food, wear plastic gloves.
13. Do not share food.
14. Use paper plates and plastic utensils and cups.
15. Wash your laundry separately. Follow washings with an extra rinse.
16. Retain wastes (dressings, paper goods, etc.) believed to be contaminated for one week before disposal.
17. Refrain from traveling by airplane or other mass transportation.
18. Refrain from traveling by automobile except for trips to and from doctor/hospital.
19. Carry the emergency identification card or letter with you after release from the Medical Center (supplied by Medical Center).
20. Terminate breast feeding (if applicable).

In case of emergency or if you have any questions, call ____________ at _____________.

Patient Agreement
I have received these instructions and have had the opportunity to ask questions regarding the limitations on my activities following release. I understand each of the recommendations described above.

____________________________________  ______________________________________
Patient Signature                                      Instructor

____________________________________  ______________________________________
Date                                      Date