Your physician has referred you for a treatment dose of radioactive iodine for hyperthyroidism (overactive thyroid gland). The treatment is intended to reduce the activity of the thyroid gland and involves swallowing a capsule containing liquid radioactive iodine (I-131 sodium iodide). You can go home immediately after the treatment and follow the recommended radiation safety precautions.

Other methods of therapy may be available, but this particular treatment is felt to be best for your situation at this time. Alternatives to this treatment and their related risks include: a) medical treatment with an antithyroid drug which may fail to control the condition or have unwanted side effects, b) surgery with possible injury to structures in the neck and risks related to general anesthesia, c) no treatment, in which case your thyrotoxic condition may persist and result in medical problems involving the heart, bones or other body parts.

We are attempting to decrease your thyroid function to normal or below normal by destroying part of your thyroid gland. Results are not always successful. There is approximately a 10% chance that the treatment will not decrease your thyroid gland function enough and thus retreatment may be necessary as your condition requires.

On the other hand, there is a high chance that the treatment will decrease your thyroid gland function below normal (approximately 90% for diffuse hyperthyroidism, 20-40% for multiple nodules, 10% for single nodules). When your thyroid function becomes less than normal, you will need to take thyroid hormone replacement medication for the rest of your life. Because this may happen anytime in the future, you should see your referring physician regularly to be sure that the amount of thyroid hormone in your blood is normal.

In general, treatment with radioactive iodine is safe and effective. However, while uncommon, there are several short and long term side effects that may occur. During the first 2 weeks after radioactive iodine treatment, you may experience worsening of hyperthyroid signs and symptoms. You should consult with your referring physician if these symptoms become significant, as there are medications that may temporarily be required for better control. Other side effects include: temporary sore throat, swelling of the neck, and tender salivary glands; and rarely, dry mouth, loss of taste, hoarseness, and loss of hair, which usually improve with time.

Female patients who might be pregnant or breastfeeding should not undergo this treatment.

Initials: __________