

YORKTOWN CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
2723 Crompond Road
Yorktown Heights, NY 10598

August

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Our school district is located within the ten-mile emergency-planning zone (EPZ) of the Indian Point nuclear power plant. In January 2001, the Federal Nuclear Regulatory Commission amended its policy on the availability and usage of the over-the-counter drug potassium iodide (KI) during a radiological emergency. As a result, New York State also revised its policy regarding providing KI to the general population in the 10-mile emergency planning zones surrounding the Indian Point nuclear power site.

KI is an over-the-counter drug that protects the thyroid from exposure to radioactive iodine. KI only protects one organ against one radioactive substance. It is not an alternative to evacuation or sheltering (see attached KI information sheet). In fact, evacuation and sheltering remain New York's primary public protective actions in the event of an accident at any nuclear power site.

Should the County and/or State Department of Health recommend the use of KI during an emergency, the Yorktown Central School District will have KI available on-site for your child. Evacuation from the ten-mile EPZ remains our primary radiological action. In the event that evacuation is not immediately possible and/or County and/or State health officials recommend KI use, an appropriate dose of KI will be available for your child.

According to the FDA, people with known iodine sensitivity, shellfish allergy, thyroid diseases, clusters of itchy skin blisters (dermatitis herpetiformis), and/or an inflammation in blood vessels involving the skin or multiple organs of the body (hypocomplementemic vasculitis) should avoid the use of KI. A physician should be consulted before an event occurs with individual concerns on whether to take KI in an emergency.

If you do **not** want the school to provide your child with KI in a radiological emergency, you **must** sign and return the enclosed form to the school nurse before **October 1st**. This form will remain in effect as long as your child attends this school building, unless you notify us in writing that you now wish your child to be protected with KI. **Please note that if you do not return the enclosed form by October 1st and health officials recommend KI use, your child will receive KI.**

If you have any concerns regarding the emergency use of KI or questions on your child's health and the use of KI, please discuss this with your child's health care provider.

If you have any further questions about the school program please contact your school nurse

French Hill School: - 243-8092

Mohansic School: - 243-8165

Brookside School: - 243-8135

Crompond School: - 243-8145

M.E.S.M.S.: - 243-8120

Yorktown High School: - 243-8080



Use of Potassium Iodide During Radiological Emergencies Information for the Public

1. Purpose

In December 2001 the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued new recommendations for the administration of potassium iodide (KI) to the general public as a supplement to evacuation and sheltering during a radiological emergency. The State of New York in turn has revised its 1982 KI Policy to reflect this new guidance. This fact sheet presents general information on KI for members of the public.

2. What is potassium iodide and what is it used for?

Potassium iodide (KI) is a chemical compound that can be used to protect the thyroid gland from possible radiation injury caused by radioactive iodine (radioiodine). Some radiological emergencies may release large amounts of radioiodine to the environment. Since iodine concentrates in the thyroid gland, inhalation or ingestion of food-contaminated with the radioiodine can lead to radiation injury to the thyroid, including increased risk of thyroid cancer and other thyroid diseases. Thyroid cancer is curable in most cases, but taking measures that reduce the chance of developing cancer are still preferable.

3. How does potassium iodide work?

Taking KI saturates the thyroid gland with stable (non-radioactive) iodine. This prevents or reduces the amount of radioiodine that can be taken up by the thyroid.

4. What age group is at the highest risk from exposure to radioiodine?

Children are the group with the highest risk. A significant late increase in the incidence of thyroid cancer among children in Belarus, Ukraine and Russia was observed as a result of exposure to radioiodine from the Chernobyl accident. The younger the children, the higher the observed risk. No similar increase was reported for adults.

5. At what radiation dose is KI indicated?

On December 10, 2001, FDA issued new guidance that sets different radiation doses for different risk groups as follows:

Age Groups	Projected Radiation Dose to the Thyroid
0 - 18 years	5 rem
Pregnant and Lactating Women	5 rem
Over 18 - 40 years	10 rem
Over 40 years	500 rem

6. When should KI be taken?

To be most effective, KI should be taken before or shortly after exposure to radioiodine. Even if taken three to four hours after exposure, it still would reduce the uptake of radioiodine by the thyroid. However, its effectiveness would be reduced.

7. How will one know if the use of KI is indicated in an emergency?

The use of KI is only indicated in emergencies where the public is likely to be exposed to radioiodine. The State and County health departments monitor all radiation emergencies and will issue advisories informing the public whether KI should be taken. In those cases where KI is indicated, the health departments will also issue advisories on when the administration of KI is no longer needed.

8. Is KI effective in all radiation emergencies?

- KI is quite effective in reducing the radiation dose to the thyroid that could result from the intake of radioiodine;
- KI does not protect other organs or tissues;
- KI does not protect against radiation doses received from sources external to the body, such as the radiation dose from the radioactive plume or from exposure to radioactive materials deposited on the ground; and
- KI does not protect against radioactive materials, other than iodine, which are inhaled or ingested.

9. What are other protective measures that can be taken in an emergency?

The existing emergency response plans in New York State rely on evacuation and sheltering of potentially affected populations to prevent their exposure to the radioactive materials that could be released in an accident. Evacuation would continue to be the primary protective measure in such accidents along with sheltering individuals who cannot relocate (captive populations). KI, if used, would only supplement evacuation and sheltering. Also, ingestion of contaminated milk or other food products can lead to significant intake of radioiodine. The primary protective measure for the ingestion pathway is the control of the food supply to prevent ingestion of contaminated products.

10. Does KI have side effects?

A study of a sample of those who were administered KI in Poland, following the Chernobyl accident, provides information on side effects of KI. A rate of one in 270 of the newborns receiving 15 mg KI