



# Facts About "KI"

## Preparing for a Nuclear Emergency

### What is KI?

KI stands for potassium iodide. Potassium iodide is an ingredient found in table salt. If taken in time and at the appropriate dosage, KI protects the thyroid gland from radioactive iodine and can reduce the risk of thyroid cancer after a severe nuclear emergency event resulting in a release of radiation.

### What is the benefit of taking KI during a nuclear emergency?

During a nuclear emergency, people can either swallow or breathe in radioactive iodines. Once inside the body, the radioactive iodines can cause a variety of health effects. The thyroid gland is very sensitive to radiation. KI can help prevent thyroid disease if taken within several hours of exposure to radiation released from a nuclear power plant.

### How soon after a nuclear emergency should KI be taken?

KI should be taken as soon as possible after public health officials tell you to do so. You should take one dose. Taking more will not help you because the thyroid can "hold" only small amounts of iodine.

### Can everyone take KI?

People who are allergic to iodine should NOT take KI. You may take KI even if you are taking medicine for thyroid problems, but check with your doctor first. Do not take KI if you have the rare disorders of dermatitis herpetiformis or hypocomplementemic vasculitis. Women who are pregnant or breast feeding can take KI. KI can also be given safely to babies and children.

**WARNING:  
Do NOT take  
KI tablets if  
you are  
allergic to  
iodine!**

### Is KI the best protection from radiation?

While KI can help to protect the thyroid gland, it cannot protect against other health effects caused by radiation. In the event of a nuclear emergency, it is best to avoid exposure to the radiation. Evacuation or sheltering in place are the best ways to avoid the problems caused by radiation. Be sure to follow any directions given by state/local health officials regarding any protective procedures.

### Are there any common side effects caused by KI?

KI has few side effects. Children are not at higher risk of side effects. Side effects usually happen when people take more doses than needed. Take the amount indicated on the table below and do not take it for longer than you are told. Possible minor side effects are skin rashes, swelling of the salivary glands, metallic taste, burning mouth, sore teeth/gums, stomach upset, diarrhea, or headaches. If you have severe side effects or a severe allergic reaction, call a doctor or go to the nearest hospital.

### How should KI tablets be stored?

KI tablets come in a sealed foil packet. Do not open them until instructed by a public health official. Keep the tablets in a safe and readily available location in your home at room temperature. Keep out of the reach of children. KI tablets can be stored in your home for up to five years.





### Do I need a prescription for KI?

KI tablets can be purchased over-the-counter at some local pharmacies without a doctor's prescription.

### What is the recommended dose of KI?

The following table gives the dosages recommended by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). You have been given 130 mg tablets that can be easily cut in half. One full 130 mg tablet is the dose for adults. For most children, the appropriate dose is half a tablet. On a firm, hard surface, using a sharp knife, cut the tablet in two. If the child is younger than three years, cut the tablet in quarters. Infants under one month of age need 1/8 of a tablet. Cutting and/or crushing tablets may be difficult during a stressful emergency situation. We recommend that you practice this process using a small, uncoated aspirin-type tablet. For younger children who may not be able to swallow a tablet, crush the tablet and add the powder to a small amount of applesauce, pudding, water, or milk. Stir to make sure the powdered tablet mixes in thoroughly.

### KI Dosages (FDA Recommended)

Risk Group	Dose	# of 130 mg	How much of
Over 18 years	130	1	
Children over 3 yrs through	65	1/2	
Children over 1 month through	32	1/4	
Birth through 1 month	16	1/8	

\*Adolescents over 12 through 18 years approaching adult size (154 lbs. and over) should receive the full adult dose.

For more information, visit the NJ Dept. of Health & Senior Services website at [www.state.nj.us/health](http://www.state.nj.us/health).

Revised 7/16/02

