

Potassium Iodide

300-09286

Potassium Iodide blocks absorption of radioactive Iodine by the thyroid gland. Cancer of the thyroid is a common side effect of radioactive fallout, particularly among children.

Radioactive Iodine once absorbed into the body through food or inhalation, concentrates in the thyroid, which has an affinity for it. If a person takes a Potassium Iodide pill any time up to a few hours after being hit by the fallout cloud, the thyroid becomes saturated with normal Iodine, blocking the uptake of the radioactive kind. The radioactive Iodine is rendered harmless by being excreted.



The US Department of Homeland Security recommends that citizens "consider keeping potassium iodide in your emergency kit" and to "learn what the appropriate doses are for each of your family members."

The FDA states the following:

"KI [Potassium Iodide] is a safe and effective means by which to prevent radioiodine uptake by the thyroid gland, under certain specified conditions of use, and thereby obviate the risk of thyroid cancer in the event of a radiation emergency."

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) recommends "potassium iodide (KI) as a protective measure for the general public that would supplement sheltering and evacuation."

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