



Oslo kommune / Oslo Local Authority Helseetaten / Agency for Health

Folkehelse- og omsorgsavdelingen / Public Health and Care Services

Preparing for a nuclear incident and distribution of iodine tablets

Information for parents/guardians and staff in schools, day-care centres, institutions under Bufetat (the Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs) and other institutions attended by children in the daytime

Iodine tablets can provide protection in the event of a nuclear incident. Nuclear power plants in Europe are ageing, and the risk of serious accidents is increasing. Moreover, the traffic of nuclear-powered vessels along our coast is increasing. An accident involving such a vessel, or a terrorist attack, could lead to radioactive emissions that could endanger Norwegians.

As part of the contingency plan in the event of a nuclear accident, Oslo local authority has stored iodine tablets in all public and private schools, day-care centres, Bufetat's institutions and other institutions attended by children in the daytime. In the event of a nuclear incident, children will be issued iodine tablets by the staff at the institution they are attending.

Prior parental consent is required if children are to be issued iodine tablets at the institution they are attending (school, day-care centre or other institution).

All pupils who are present at an upper secondary school during a nuclear incident will be issued iodine tablets.

People who have not purchased iodine tablets for storing at home are recommended to buy them at a pharmacy, a prescription is not required. You can also be issued iodine tablets at the ER (*legevakten*) if an incident occurs.

The iodine tablets stored in schools, day-care centres and other institutions are tested annually by the Norwegian Medicines Agency (*Statens legemiddelverk*). It is safe to use the tablets, and they are effective even if the expiry date has passed. If testing reveals a reduction in quality, the tablets will be recalled.

The target group

The target group for using iodine tablets is children and young people under 18 years of age, and pregnant and breast-feeding women. These people have the largest absorption of iodine and will benefit the most from taking the tablets. Advice can be given about the ingestion of iodine tablets in special cases for adults aged between 18 and 40 years of age, see the section on individual preparedness.

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Using iodine tablets

Absorption of radioactive iodine increases the risk of contracting cancer in the thyroid gland. If there is an incident with radioactive iodine emissions, iodine tablets can block the absorption of radioactive iodine, and can be one of several protective measures recommended by the Crisis Committee for Nuclear Preparedness.

Iodine tablets only protect against radioactive iodine and not against other radioactive substances. The tablets must be ingested as soon as possible after the Crisis Committee for Nuclear Preparedness has recommended that they be taken, and within four hours after exposure to radioactive iodine in the air, food and/or water supply.

Personal preparedness

Iodine tablets are sold without a prescription in pharmacies. It is recommended that families buy iodine tablets for children and young people under 18 years of age, for pregnant and breast-feeding women and for household members under 40 years of age.

Consent

Iodine tablets will be issued when prior parental consent has been given. Consent is obtained by the schools, day-care centres and institutions that the children attend in the daytime.

Warnings and precautions

- The risk of side effects from taking iodine tablets is very low for children and young people
- Pregnant and breastfeeding women must avoid taking more than the recommended dosage
- When giving iodine to newly born babies (the first month of life) special precautions apply
- People who have inflammation of the thyroid (thyroiditis), thyroid dysfunction or dermatitis herpetiformis disorder (Dühring's disease) must not take iodine tablets
- People who are allergic to potassium iodide or any of the ingredients in the medicine must not take iodine tablets
- People who have had their thyroid gland surgically removed do not need to take iodine tablets

In the event of a nuclear incident

Seek advice about whether you should stay indoors and about ingesting iodine tablets, and check the Internet, television and radio for updates. Iodine tablets must **only** be ingested when it has been recommended to do so.

Relevant websites

Oslo City's website: <https://www.oslo.kommune.no>

The Norwegian Radiation and Nuclear Safety Authority's website:
<https://www.dsa.no/atomberedskap>