NOTES FOR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

**Issue of potassium iodide tablets following incidents in nuclear plants**

**Why should potassium iodide tablets be taken?**

As we now know from experience in Byelorussia, the Ukraine and other parts of Russia, the nuclear catastrophe at Chernobyl led to a dramatic increase in thyroid cancer amongst children. A multiple of the otherwise customary frequency of this form of cancer was recorded in heavily polluted regions.

Radioactive iodine can be released in large quantities after the more serious reactor incidents and can also be carried across to us from plants close to the border and in unfavourable weather conditions. Potassium iodide tablets, when taken in good time, offer effective protection against the absorption of radioactive iodine into the thyroid gland and consequently against thyroid cancer. Stocking these tablets is therefore an important step in protection against radiation.

Other appropriate protective measures are being adopted against other radioactive substances and against external radiation.

**When should potassium iodide tablets be taken?**

**THE TABLETS MAY BE ADMINISTERED OR TAKEN IN THE EVENT OF A CATASTROPHE ONLY ON EXPRESS INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE HEALTH AUTHORITIES.**

A public announcement of this kind may be expected only if

- An extremely serious nuclear incident occurs close to the border, with the large-scale release of radioactive iodine and
- Weather conditions indicate a massive drift of radioactive iodine into Austria.

The announcement may be made also while your child is at school.

**In that case, rapid administration of the first daily dose while at school is important for your child’s protection.** The first daily dose of potassium iodide for your child will therefore be kept ready there. A complete individual pack of 10 tablets will be available for children at boarding school.

Your consent must have been obtained before your child can be given potassium iodide tablets in a day school or boarding school.

The following procedure is laid down in the event of a catastrophe:

- **WARNING BY SIRENS OR LOUD SPEAKER VANS IF THERE IS RISK IN DELAY**
- **SWITCH ON RADIO/TV**
- **POTASSIUM IODIDE TABLETS MAY BE ISSUED TO CHILDREN FOR WHOM CONSENT HAS BEEN OBTAINED ONLY ON EXPRESS INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE AUTHORITIES**
- **AWAIT AND FOLLOW FURTHER OFFICIAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR FURTHER ACTION.**

**Who should take potassium iodide tablets?**

Experience following Chernobyl and subsequent scientific findings have shown that children and young people are particularly at risk of thyroid cancer through a large-scale release of radioactive iodine.

That is why the public stocking campaign is specially aimed at children and young people as the target group.
How will the tablets be administered and taken (daily dosage)?

The tablets or tablet fractions are crushed and taken with a little liquid, possibly with a snack. One tablet contains 65 mg of potassium iodide; the tablets can be halved and quartered as required.

### Dosage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Recommended Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Newborn (1st month of life)</td>
<td>¼ tablet once only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small children (from the 2nd month to below 3 years)</td>
<td>½ tablet per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children aged 3 to below 12</td>
<td>1 tablet per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young people aged 12 to below 18</td>
<td>2 tablets per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pregnant and breast-feeding women</td>
<td>2 tablets once only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons aged 18 to below 40</td>
<td>2 tablets once only</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Counter indications

In case of doubt, please consult your GP!

Potassium iodide 65 mg tablets must not be taken in the case of:
- Known over-sensitivity to iodine such as, e.g. ioderma tuberosum (dark red, round, spongy-soft skin changes with ulcer-type incrusted surface)
- Known over-sensitivity to any other component of the product
- Earlier or present disorder of the thyroid gland (e.g. hyperactivity of the gland)
- Dermatitis herpetiformis (chronic repetitive skin impairment with herpes-like blistering, rash and inflammatory itch)
- Hypo-complementemic vasculitis (allergically caused inflammation of the vascular walls)

Please also notify changes in the presence of counter-indications immediately to the school management.

### Special warning signs

Special caution is required with persons with
- Bronchial asthma
- Cardiac insufficiency
- Kidney function impairments
- Auto-immune diseases.

In these cases, please consult your GP as to whether the administration of potassium iodide is advisable for your child. Your GP will undertake or arrange the necessary examination in this connection and discuss the possibility of the tablets to be taken with you beforehand. Please note that in these cases a check may also be necessary on your child after taking the tablets, about which you should consult your GP.

### Side effects

A light irritation of the gastric mucous membrane may occur when the tablets are taken on an empty stomach. The tablets should therefore be dissolved in a little liquid or taken with a snack.

Over-sensitivity reactions may appear several hours after potassium iodide tablets have been taken. They include reddening of the skin, temporary reddening of the face, deterioration in existing skin impairments, iodine acne, inflammation of the gums, conjunctiva or nasal mucous membrane (sniffing), and increased mucus-forming in the bronchia.

Potassium iodide may cause disorders of the thyroid gland. Please consult your GP if your child displays an increased pulse rate or sweating attacks after taking potassium iodide tablets. Iodine products were administered to more than 10 million children and more than 6 million adults in
Poland following the nuclear catastrophe in Chernobyl. The side effects observed were mild and short-lived.

In case of doubt please consult your GP. Please immediately inform the management of the school or boarding school should any of the illnesses or intolerances mentioned above be apparent in your child.

Medical advice must be obtained if side-effects appear.