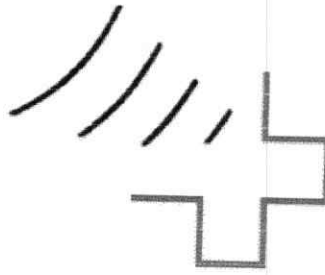


Eidg. Departement des Innern  
Département fédéral de l'intérieur  
Dipartimento federale dell'interno  
Departament federal da l'intern



Nationale Alarmzentrale  
Centrale nationale d'alarme  
Centrale nazionale d'allarme  
Centrala nazionale d'alarm

## Iodine Prophylaxis / Iodine Tablets

Potassium iodide protects the thyroid gland from radioactive iodine. The iodine in the tablets saturates the thyroid gland so that it cannot absorb any radioactive iodine. However, potassium iodide tablets offer no protection against external irradiation affecting the body and respiratory organs, so their intake must be combined with further protective measures (remaining indoors or taking cover in basements and shelters).

The National Emergency Operations Centre orders potassium iodide tablets to be held ready and taken when:

- **Danger is imminent:** Instructions to hold tablets ready
- **Danger exists:** Instructions to take tablets

All instructions to the general public are broadcast by radio.

Iodine tablet distribution methods take account of the time available, in the event of an incident in a Swiss nuclear power station, for taking and implementing protective measures and vary from zone to zone:

[Who we are](#)

[What we do](#)

[Our resources](#)

[Our partners](#)

[Exercises](#)

[Publications](#)

[Home](#)

- In the immediate vicinity of nuclear power plants (Zone 1 = within about 4 km of the nearest nuclear power station), dangerous situations requiring quick protective action may arise, so tablets are distributed in advance to households, schools, businesses, etc.
- In Zone 2 (about 4 - 20 km from the nearest nuclear power station), Cantons and communes can waive precautionary distribution of iodine tablets if it is ensured that these tablets can be issued to the general public within two hours (on a collection basis).
- Elsewhere in Switzerland (Zone 3), it must be possible to distribute iodine tablets to the general public within twelve hours of the order being issued.

The general public should take the iodine tablets only when so instructed by the authorities (radio message). The dosage is clearly indicated on the packaging and complies with World Health Organization (WHO) recommendations. The potassium iodide tablets are to be dissolved in any liquid and swallowed, if possible not on an empty stomach. If taken properly, in the correct dosage, side-effects are virtually excluded.

