

The 3 different treatments for an overactive thyroid

Information for patients

Treatment	Cannot use if	Advantages	Disadvantages
Tablets carbimazole, propylthiouracil (PTU)	You have had a severe reaction to one of these drugs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Quite quick to work (4-6 weeks) ■ Sudden swings in thyroid hormone level unlikely ■ Painless 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 12-18 months course of tablets ■ Thyroid overactivity comes back in 60-70% of patients after treatment. ■ 10% risk of rash or other minor side-effects ■ Very rarely stops production of white blood cells
Radioiodine	You are pregnant or breast feeding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Painless ■ Permanent - low chance of over activity coming back 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Slow action (up to 6 months): tablets may be needed during this time ■ High chance (50%-80%) of permanent thyroid under activity requiring thyroxine tablets ■ May worsen eye problems ■ Need to avoid prolonged close contact with others for a 1-2 weeks after treatment
Surgery	You are unfit for an operation or your thyroid over activity is not controlled first	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Quick (days) ■ Permanent - low chance of over activity coming back 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Risk of general anaesthetic ■ Low risk of causing hoarse voice or damage to calcium controlling glands ■ Likely to cause thyroid under activity requiring thyroxine tablets ■ Temporary discomfort ■ Neck scar

Patient Self Help Groups Who Can Offer You Further Support And Information: www.btf-thyroid.org

This site has links to the British Thyroid Foundation and the Thyroid Eye Disease (TED) Charitable Trust. PO Box 97, Clifford, Wetherby, West Yorkshire, LS23 6XD.

Further information about thyroid disease is also found at: www.endocrineweb.com and www.patient.co.uk

Department Of Endocrinology

Royal Sussex County Hospital, Brighton Telephone: 01273 696955
Princess Royal Hospital, Haywards Heath Telephone: 01444 441881

Disclaimer The information in this leaflet is for guidance purposes only and is in no way intended to replace professional clinical advice by a qualified practitioner.