

Thyroid Cancer Canada -- RAI Isolation Room, What to Pack?

RAI Isolation Room Essentials

*Note the following list was compiled with the help of patient-members of TCC, but the rules and guidelines vary a great deal from one treatment centre to the next, and one **must check with the facility** to be sure what they allow in and out of the hospital's isolation rooms.*

The following items (other than the clothes you arrived at the hospital wearing) will likely need to be discarded at the hospital following your isolation time. We suggest you bring:

1. your own old clothes and/or pyjamas. Bring an old nightgown or pyjamas, as you will likely be asked to discard them at the end of your stay. Bring an old sweater or bathrobe as well, in case you find your room cold. Same may be true of clothes if you chose to wear those instead while in isolation, such as comfortable sweat pants. You can go home in the clothes you wore to the hospital originally and left unworn during your treatment time, or your driver can bring you a fresh outfit.
2. socks and slippers (again, old ones that you don't mind discarding). You'll want to keep your feet covered at all times.
3. shower sandals (inexpensive flip-flops)
4. toothbrush & toothpaste (old ones or travel-size to leave behind)
5. your own shampoo, conditioner, body wash and moisturizer (any little comfort from home is nice). Some people prefer to bring their own soft toilet paper & tissues as well.
6. whatever medications you must take daily. Also consider bringing: pain medication (eg. Tylenol), anti-nausea (eg. Gravol) and anti-heartburn (eg. Zantac) if you think any of these issues may be of concern. Only bring enough for the days of your stay, in well-marked packaging as you may be required to leave the rest of your supply in the isolation room. If you want to take your own medications, notify the nursing station before you take your dose.
7. LID food. It is suggested that you remain on the LID for 48 hours after your treatment. However, treatment hospitals do not provide LID meals. Be wary of what is served to you, especially avoiding the products you know to be high in iodine content (foods from the ocean, iodized salt, dairy/milk, and eggs). Most hospitals allow patients to bring a supply of their own food, and some provide a refrigerator in the isolation room. It is convenient to bring: fruits, homemade trail-mix, and the ingredients to make LID-safe peanut butter & jam sandwiches/crackers. Some hospitals allow family/friends to bring LID foods (check with the facility).
8. Some sour items. It is advisable to put something sour in your mouth every few hours, to stimulate your salivary glands (so that RAI does not negatively affect them). You can bring lemons, grapefruit or sour candy. The hospital may also supply you with sour candy or lemon slices.
9. vinyl or latex gloves (to handle your own electronic equipment with). The hospital will usually supply these, but bring some if you prefer.

Optional Items:

Note: Hospital policies greatly vary in regards to what patients are allowed to take back home with them, from the isolation room. Most will allow items in and out that have not been heavily touched by the patient. For example, knitting and pocket books may have to be left behind (or picked up at a later date). Most hospital rooms have a TV and phone.

Keep the following items in zip lock or other plastic bags and use them that way if possible, so that you will not have touched the item itself while in isolation:

1. iPad, iPod, netbook or laptop (some hospitals have free wireless internet)
2. cell phone (use the speakerphone mode so you can hear and talk easily). Keep your chargers in separate zip lock bag (wear gloves when you handle the charger or other electronics)
3. a long distance phone card (use the hospital room phone, or your own cell phone, to catch up on long-distance calls)
4. magazines & books
5. CD/DVD player

Leave at Home:

all jewellery and valuables