

# potassium iodide

Pharmacy Author: **Omudhome Ogburu, PharmD** Medical and Pharmacy Editor: **Jay W. Marks, MD**

## What is potassium iodide, and how does it work (mechanism of action)?

 Privacy & Trust Info

Potassium iodide is a **iodine**-containing liquid that is used to protect the thyroid gland and to loosen secretions in the **lungs** (expectorant) so that they can be more easily coughed up (expectorated). Procedures that involve the use of radioactive iodine can damage the thyroid gland because the gland accumulates iodine. Non-radioactive potassium iodide can protect the thyroid gland by blocking uptake of radioactive iodine into the thyroid gland. Potassium iodide works as an expectorant by increasing secretion of thinner **mucus** by the lungs.

## What brand names are available for potassium iodide?

SSKI, Pima syrup, ThyroSafe, ThyroShield.

## Is potassium iodide available as a generic drug?

No

## Do I need a prescription for potassium iodide?

Yes

## What are the side effects of potassium iodide?

Common side effects of potassium iodide are stomach upset, **diarrhea**, **nausea**, **vomiting**, skin **rash**, **weakness**, numbness, **fever**, and swelling of throat or neck.

## What is the dosage for potassium iodide?

Adults and children over 12 years of age and weight 150 lbs or greater:

- **Prevention** of thyroid gland injury due to **radiation**: 130 mg by mouth once daily with a maximum of one dose per day.
- Expectorant: 300 – 600 mg by mouth every 6 to 8 hours.

Children:

Prevention of thyroid gland injury due to radiation:

- Infants of less than 1 month: 16.25 mg by mouth once daily. Maximum one dose per day.
- Infants of 1 month to children of 3 years of age: 32.5 mg by mouth once daily. Maximum one dose per day.
- Children of 3 to 12 years of age: 65 mg by mouth once daily. Maximum one dose per day.

Expectorant: 60 – 250 mg by mouth every 6 hours.

## Which drugs or supplements interact with potassium iodide?

Potassium iodide should not be given together with sodium iodide I-131 (radioactive iodide) that is being used to treat **thyroid disease**, because potassium iodide can prevent the absorption of sodium iodide I-131 into the thyroid gland. Potassium iodide should be discontinued at least 3 to 4 days prior to using sodium iodide I-131.

Potassium iodide should be used with caution with **lithium** because concurrent use of both medications can lead to **hypothyroidism**.



**IQ**

— QUESTION —



## Where is the thyroid gland located?

See Answer

### Is potassium iodide safe to take if I'm pregnant or breastfeeding?

There is increased risk of thyroid suppression in the **newborn** with potassium iodide.

Potassium iodide should not be used during **pregnancy**.

Potassium iodide is excreted in **breast milk**. Use in **nursing** mothers can cause skin **rash** and thyroid suppression in nursing infants. Therefore, potassium iodide should not be used in nursing mothers.

### What else should I know about potassium iodide?

#### What preparations of potassium iodide are available?

Tablet: 65 and 130 mg. Solution: 65 and 325 mg/5 ml. Concentrated Solution: 1 g/ml

#### How should I keep potassium iodide stored?

Potassium iodide should be stored between 15 C - 30 C (59 F - 86 F). The solution should be kept in a tightly closed bottle protected from light.

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## Summary

Potassium iodide is used to protect the thyroid from radiation injury. Side effects, drug interactions, dosage, storage, and pregnancy safety information should be reviewed prior to taking this medication.



— SLIDESHOW —

## Hyperthyroidism Symptoms and Treatment

[See Slideshow](#)

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