

POTASSIUM IODIDE (KI) TREATMENT FOR ANIMALS FOLLOWING A NUCLEAR DISASTER

Fact Sheet for Owners

Do NOT give your KI to your pets. The KI provided by public health is for you and your family. Public Health does not provide KI for animals.

Should I give KI to my pets?

This should be determined with your veterinarian with the following things in mind:

- The KI supplied is not labeled for use in pets. Using this medicine for your pets should only be done under the guidance of your veterinarian.
- The state of North Carolina does not endorse “off label” use of medicine in animals and encourages you to seek the advice of your veterinarian.
- KI can harm your pet if not dosed correctly, as can all medications. Consult your veterinarian regarding dosage recommendations should you choose to use this drug.
- While not all veterinarians and pharmacies stock this over-the-counter medication, it is OK to ask for it. Also, veterinarians and pharmacies can special order KI by request.
- Do not give KI to your pet if it is sensitive to iodine.

What is the most important thing I can do to protect my animals in a Nuclear Disaster?

- Plan ahead and discuss this with your vet at your next appointment. Know where you can keep your animals if you need to leave your home (make plans with friends, relatives, or shelters for housing). This will be helpful for a nuclear accident or any natural disaster.
- Include pets when practicing evacuation plans from your home.
- Purchase pet carriers or trailers to be used during an evacuation.
- Have your pet micro-chipped for easy identification in the event you become separated.
- Ensure your pet has a current rabies vaccination and certificate.

What is KI treatment and what does it do?

- Potassium Iodide (KI) is an inorganic compound that is used to protect the thyroid gland from radioactive iodine in the event of nuclear accident. KI does not protect against other harmful radioactive rays released during a nuclear disaster.
- KI tablets are essentially a type of salt and do not go bad as long as they are stored in a dry place at room temperature (around 70°F) in their original and unopened packets. Table salt does NOT contain enough iodine to block radioactive iodine from getting into your thyroid gland. **Table salt is NOT a substitute for KI and could be harmful if given to animals in large quantities.**
- KI has also been approved by the FDA as a nonprescription drug for use as a “blocking agent” to prevent the human thyroid gland from absorbing radioactive iodine.
- KI may not provide people or animals 100 percent protection against all radioactive iodine.
- In people the effectiveness of KI as a thyroid blocking agent is greatest if administered immediately before the time of exposure to radioactive iodine, but taking it right after exposure will also provide some benefit.

For more information about KI go to: www.epi.state.nc.us/epi/phpr/ki/ki.html

To find a vet in your area go to: www.ncvma.org