

## Nuclear Medicine Scans

Your doctor would like you to come for a **Nuclear Medicine test** (also called a **radioisotope scan**). This leaflet will answer some of the questions you may have.

### What is a Nuclear Medicine scan?

A small amount of radioactivity is used to obtain pictures which will help your doctor understand your illness.

### What is involved?

The radioactive dose is usually injected into a vein, or under the skin, depending on the scan required. You may then have to wait before pictures are taken with a gamma camera. The waiting time depends upon the type of scan. Your appointment letter will tell you if you will have to wait. If there is a waiting time, you will be able to leave the department and we will tell you the actual time to return for the scan

During your scan you will have to lie on a bed. Please contact the department if you are not able to lie flat as we may have to change how the scan is done. You do not normally need to take off your clothes. Please wear loose, comfortable clothing with no large metal fasteners or belts. Please leave any jewellery at home as it may need to be removed for the scan. We cannot take responsibility for any items lost in the department.

The 'Gamma camera' scanner will be very close to you during the scan, depending on the area being scanned. Please tell us beforehand if you might have problems with this. You may be able to come & try the scan position before your appointment to make sure you can manage.



After the scan, you can go back home or to work. One person may accompany you to the department but we would advise this not to be a child or pregnant woman.

### If I am taking tablets or other drugs, do I need to stop?

For most tests there is no need to change any regular treatment. If you do need to stop taking a drug, your appointment letter will tell you.

### Preparation for the scan.

Usually you can eat or drink as normal before coming for this scan. However, if you have been told to starve in the appointment letter, please follow those instructions.

Please wear loose fitting comfortable clothing without any large metal buttons, rivets or clips.

**If you are pregnant, think you may be pregnant or if you are breast feeding, please call the department before your appointment.**

### Will it hurt?

Only the 'pinprick' of the injection needle may hurt a bit. You may have had a blood test in the past, this is much the same. You should not feel ill effects from the injection. It does not make you feel sleepy or prevent you from driving a car.

## Is the radiation dangerous?

The injection contains a small amount of radioactivity (equivalent to a few days, weeks or months of additional background radiation depending on the scan), but the risk involved is very small. Your doctor would not consider asking us to carry out the scan unless it was believed that you would benefit from the information gained. The total amount of radiation is similar to some other x-ray procedures.

## After the scan

You can eat and drink normally. Please avoid spending longer than 10 minutes per hour in close contact with children or anyone who is pregnant for **between 3 and 18 hours** after the injection time (depending on the scan); and reduce close contact with other adults for **up to 9 hours**. We will tell you how long this advice will be for after your injection. This is to reduce their radiation exposure as much as possible.

**Please note:** *If a family member or friend usually helps you (the patient) with any personal care, please be aware that they may receive a small exposure to radiation in the 24 hours after your scan. This radiation exposure is usually no greater than the natural background radiation that would be received in a few weeks. The person who helps you will need to be informed of this exposure and agree to help you around the time of your examination. If you have any concerns, please call nuclear medicine on 01392 402124 to discuss with our staff.*

## Changing your appointment

The injection material is made specifically for your appointment. If you are unable to keep this appointment, please let us know as soon as possible on 01392 402124. We may then be able to offer this appointment to another patient. A further date and time will then be arranged for you.

## Finally

All the staff would like to make your visit as pleasant as possible. If you have any questions or concerns or if you found reading this leaflet difficult or you do not understand what it means for you, please do not hesitate to contact us:

**Nuclear Medicine Department**

01392 402124

or alternatively you can email us  
rduh.rdenuclearmedicine@nhs.net

## More information and how to get here

For more information on the department and how to get to the Royal Devon & Exeter Hospital at Wonford

**Please refer to the enclosed leaflet or use the Trusts website for the latest information:**

[www.rdehospital.nhs.uk/patients/where](http://www.rdehospital.nhs.uk/patients/where)

For more information on the Medical Imaging Department, including Nuclear Medicine please visit our website:

[www.rdehospital.nhs.uk/patients/services/medical-imaging](http://www.rdehospital.nhs.uk/patients/services/medical-imaging)

The Trust cannot accept any responsibility for the accuracy of the information given if the leaflet is not used by Royal Devon staff undertaking procedures at the Royal Devon hospitals.

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