

## Nuclear Medicine Scans

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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 would 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.

### What about eating and drinking?

For most tests you can eat and drink as normal. If you do need to stop eating or drinking, your appointment letter will tell you.

### Will it hurt?

Only the 'pinprick' of the injection needle. 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.

## Do I need to do anything after the scan?

You can eat, drink and go where you wish. You may be asked to drink more than usual for the rest of the day. This is to help wash the radioactivity out of your body, the rest will disappear naturally. You need to avoid close contact with children and pregnant women for up to 48 hours after your injection time. The exact length of time will be explained to you when you attend for your appointment. This is to avoid exposing children to unnecessary radiation. Contact with adults and pets is not restricted.

## What happens to the results of the scan?

A report is sent to the doctor who asked us to do the scan. We will not be able to tell you the results directly.

Is there anything I should tell the staff before the scan?

Yes. If you are a woman, please tell us if you are pregnant, or if you think you may be pregnant. Also, please tell us if you are breast feeding.

*If you have any more questions about your scan, please ask the staff in the:*

**Nuclear Medicine Department**  
Royal Devon & Exeter Hospital (Wonford)  
Barrack Road  
Exeter EX2 5DW

Telephone Number: (01392) 402124

Email: [rde-tr.rdenuclearmedicine@nhs.net](mailto:rde-tr.rdenuclearmedicine@nhs.net)

For more information on how to get to the hospital, please use the following website:  
**[www.rdehospital.nhs.uk/patients/where](http://www.rdehospital.nhs.uk/patients/where)**

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