



Mater Misericordiae University Hospital

Preparing for your Thyroid Scan

What is Nuclear Medicine?

In Nuclear Medicine we use an injection of a small amount of radioactivity. This injection travels into the blood stream and is absorbed by your thyroid glands. A 'thyroid scan' gives your doctor more information about your illness, sometimes not seen on other scans, like an ultrasound scan.

Due to the fact this radiation travels in the blood stream any other test (blood tests, physiotherapy etc.) should be avoided on the day of the scan or done prior to the injection.

What will your scan involve?

The scan involves a doctor giving you a small injection into a vein in your arm. This injection should have no side effects (such as making you sleepy). We then have to wait 20-30 minutes before the injection is absorbed by the thyroid gland.

On returning you will be asked to lie on a bed and a special camera will be placed over your neck, this takes about 20 minutes. You will not need to undress except to remove metal objects (necklaces or chains).

Is there any preparation?

If you are taking any medication related to your thyroid (neomercazole or eltroxin or PTU) you need to stop taking them 3 days prior to your appointment.

What about after the scan?

After the scan you will be well enough to go home or back to work and you should drink another couple of glasses of water after the scan.

It is recommended that you minimise the time you spend in close contact (within 2 meters) with small children and pregnant women for the 6 hours following the injection, to avoid unnecessarily exposing them to very small amounts of radiation. Please do not bring small children to the department with you, however, you are quite welcome to bring an adult companion to the department as long as they are definitely not pregnant or trying for a baby

How much radiation will I get?

Firstly, it is very important to know that you will only receive a very small amount of radiation. We are all exposed to natural background radiation during our lives. The radiation dose from this scan is similar to that which you would receive from the environment over a period of 1-2 years. The benefits to you having this scan outweigh any possible radiation risks.



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Do I need to bring anything with me?

Don't forget to bring your appointment card if your doctor gave you one. Although every effort is made to keep to the appointed times, unforeseeable events may cause delays and therefore a magazine/book may be useful. We do have to wait till you arrive before we can prepare the injection so please be patient and on time!

How soon will I get the results?

A doctor in Nuclear Medicine analyses your scan and writes a report, which is then sent to your referring doctor within 10 working days.

When you come for your scan you will first need to go to the X-ray department.

LADIES

It is very important that we avoid carrying out this examination if you are pregnant or think you might be pregnant. If this is the case, please contact us in advance. When you arrive for your scan you will be asked for the date of the first day of your last period. If your period is overdue, your appointment date may be re-arranged.