

Your Nuclear Medicine Test and You

Things you might like to know

Your Well-Being

- You are having a nuclear medicine test so that your doctor or healthcare practitioner can either make a diagnosis or monitor the progress of your treatment.
- Nuclear Medicine involves the use of radiation. We make sure that the benefits from making the right diagnosis or providing the correct treatment outweigh the low risk involved with the radiation itself.

Our Standards

- Our equipment is regularly maintained and checked by our Technologists and Medical Physics staff.
- These checks ensure the amount of radiation we use is kept as low as possible to get the pictures or information we need.

About Radiation and X-Rays

- We are all exposed to natural background radiation every day of our lives. This comes from our environment, the air we breathe, the food we eat and even from outer space (cosmic rays).
- To perform your test we will give you a small amount of additional radiation, usually by injection. If your radiation is to be given another way this will be explained to you.
- If your test requires pictures to be taken, this is performed using a gamma camera.
- Your test may also include a CT scan. CT scanners use radiation to generate 3D "pictures" of the body.
- After your test you will still have radiation in your body. This will naturally decay away. For some tests we may ask that you restrict your contact with children or those who are pregnant.

Putting it in Perspective

- During your nuclear medicine test you will receive a small amount of radiation in addition to the natural background radiation you already receive.
- The amount of radiation you receive is small. It is equivalent to what you might be exposed to naturally over 1 - 4 years, depending on your test.
- The test you are having today carries a low risk from radiation.

If you would like more information about the radiation you will receive for your particular test please ask a member of staff.

Pregnancy and Breastfeeding

If you are pregnant or think you may be pregnant, or are breastfeeding, please inform a member of staff immediately.



Age

The risks from radiation are lower for older people and higher for children. The amount of radiation used is carefully monitored for all patients and is reduced for young patients.

Did you know?

Over 300 nuclear medicine tests are performed in Scotland every working day.



Gamma camera



Bone Scan

There are over 50 different types of nuclear medicine test, the most common test is called a "Bone Scan".

Consent

Please feel free to ask your doctor or a staff member if you have any further questions. You can refuse to have the test if you do not feel you have sufficient information.