

Nuclear Medicine

Your Lung (VQ) Scan

Your doctor would like you to have a Nuclear Medicine Lung scan and has arranged for you to visit our department. We would like your visit to be as pleasant as possible and hope this leaflet will answer some of the questions you may have.

WHAT IS A LUNG SCAN?

This is a test to examine the blood and air supplies to your lungs. A small amount of radioactivity is used to obtain pictures of your lungs and these will help your doctor understand your illness.

IS THE SCAN SAFE?

Yes. We will ensure that the amount of radiation you receive is as small as possible. The radioactivity leaves the body very quickly and it will not make you feel sick or sleepy.

DO I NEED TO PREPARE FOR THE SCAN?

No, you do not need to do anything special. You can eat and drink normally and keep taking your tablets.

WHAT IS INVOLVED?

The test is in 2 parts.

The first part looks at the air supply to your lungs. You will be asked to breathe a slightly radioactive mist through a mouth piece for a few minutes. No discomfort is involved and the mist is harmless. We will then take some pictures with a special camera for about 20 minutes while you lie on a bed.

The second part looks at the blood supply to your lungs. You will be given a slightly radioactive injection into a vein in your arm. This is harmless with no side effects. We then take more pictures which take about 10 minutes.

You will not normally need to remove clothing. The camera is quite open and quiet and patients do not normally feel claustrophobic.

We may require you to have a chest x-ray which we will arrange when you arrive for your test.

Your appointment letter will tell you the time to arrive. Please allow about 1½ hours for your test.

IS THERE ANYTHING I SHOULD TELL THE STAFF BEFORE THE SCAN?

Would women please tell us if you are pregnant or if you think you may be pregnant. Also, please inform us if you are breast-feeding. Women between the ages of 12 and 55 will be asked to sign a form on the day of their test to confirm they are not pregnant. If there is any doubt, we are legally obliged to perform a pregnancy test before proceeding.

Please tell the staff if you are planning to travel abroad within one week of your scan.

WHAT CAN I DO AFTER THE SCAN?

You can go home or to work. You can drive a car, eat and drink normally and continue taking your tablets.

WHAT HAPPENS TO THE RESULTS?

We cannot give you the results of your test. We will send a report to the doctor who asked for the scan as soon as possible. They will arrange your follow-up appointment.