

Nuclear Medicine

Your White Cell Scan

Your doctor would like you to have a Nuclear Medicine White Cell 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 WHITE CELL SCAN?

A white cell scan looks for sites of infection within your body by labelling your white cells with a small amount of radioactivity to produce pictures of any collection of white cells. The pictures 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?

Shortly after you arrive we will take a blood sample from you. You will be free to leave the department for about 90mins, during which time your white cells will be separated from the blood sample and labelled with a small amount of radioactivity. This will be re-injected into a vein and is harmless with no side effects. About 5hrs later and the next day you will be scanned with a special camera for about an hour. Once you have had your injection, if you need to go to the toilet, you will need to use our special patient toilet – please ask at reception for the door code. It's important that you sit down while using this toilet.

HOW IS THE SCAN PERFORMED?

The scan involves taking pictures while you lie on a bed. The camera is placed close to the part of your body being studied. Please remove any metal, including keys and loose change, belts or necklaces, that you are wearing before the scan.

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.

As some of the radioactive tracer will pass out in your urine, please tell us if you suffer at all from incontinence before you come for your scan.

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

WHAT CAN I DO AFTER THE SCAN?

You can go home or to work, but please avoid close contact with children or pregnant women for the following 72 hours. 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.