

Nuclear Medicine

Your Gastric Emptying Scan

Your doctor would like you to have a Nuclear Medicine Gastric Emptying 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 THE SCAN FOR?

The test is to look at how your stomach empties after a meal of eggs, toast and jam. We do this by taking pictures with a special camera after adding a small amount of radioactivity to the eggs.

IS THE SCAN SAFE?

Yes. We will make sure 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?

You will need to fast overnight and stop smoking (if this applies to you) from midnight prior to your test or at least six hours before your test.

You will also need to stop medications that could affect gastric emptying for 48 hours: these include opiates, anticholinergics and tricyclic antidepressants. We will contact you to check your drugs. If you have diabetes we will need to test your blood sugar, which should be less than 15mmol/L.

WHAT DOES THE SCAN INVOLVE?

Shortly after you arrive, you will be asked to eat the meal of eggs, toast and jam. Immediately after this we will ask you to stand between two plates of a special type of camera for a one minute picture of your abdomen. If you find it difficult standing we can take the pictures with you lying down. This picture will be repeated one, two and four hours later. During this time you should not eat, smoke or be too active; you may stay in the department.

Once you have had the feed, 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 LONG WILL WE BE AT THE HOSPITAL?

Please allow four and a half hours for your appointment.

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

Female patients 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.

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

WHAT CAN I DO AFTER THE SCAN?

There are no restrictions on what you can do after the scan. You may drive a car, eat and drink normally and continue taking your tablets.

WHAT HAPPENS TO THE RESULTS OF THE SCAN?

We are not able to give you the results of the test on the day of your appointment. A report will go to the doctor who asked for the test. The doctor will arrange for you to get the results.

WHAT DO I DO IF I HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS ABOUT THE SCAN?

Please ring us on the number above and we will try to answer any questions or concerns that you have.