

Nuclear Medicine

Bile Acid Mal-absorption Study/ Sehcat Study

Your doctor would like you to have a Nuclear Medicine bile acid mal-absorption/ or Sehcat study 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 SEHCAT STUDY?

This is a study to measure the degree of bile acid retention within your body. Sehcat is an artificial bile acid labelled with a small amount of radioactivity. After you swallow a capsule containing a small amount of this we can measure the amount in your body at 3hrs and 7days.

IS THE STUDY SAFE?

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

DO I NEED TO PREPARE FOR THE STUDY?

Yes, you must fast from midnight and until an hour after swallowing the capsule. From then on you can eat and drink normally and keep taking your tablets.

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

Please let us know if you have had a colonoscopy within the last 2 weeks.

Please let us know if you are taking any medications containing bile acid sequestrants such as colestyramin. 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 three months of your scan.

WHAT IS INVOLVED?

Shortly after you arrive we will check that you have fasted and ask you to swallow the Sehcat capsule with a small amount of water. You are then free to leave the department, but do not eat or drink for a further 1hour. 3hrs later return to the department when we will count the amount of radioactivity in your body for 10mins using a camera at about 2m distance from you. This count is repeated 1 week later enabling us to calculate the bile acid retention in your body. You do not need to fast for the second appointment.

WHAT CAN I DO AFTER THE SCAN?

You can drive a car; eat and drink normally and continue taking your tablets from 1 hour after taking the capsule.

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.