

CAN I HAVE A NUCLEAR MEDICINE SCAN?

If you are pregnant or think you may be pregnant, please inform your referring doctor so this can be discussed with the Nuclear Medicine Imaging Specialist. It is also important that you advise us if you are breastfeeding so that we can determine if it is safe for you to have a scan.

IS NUCLEAR MEDICINE SAFE?

SKG Radiology Nuclear Medicine is staffed by highly-qualified Nuclear Medicine Imaging Specialists, many of whom have undertaken additional accredited overseas training and have extensive experience in diagnostic imaging. By working as a co-ordinated team, we will provide you with a high level of patient care and quality diagnostic service.

SKG Radiology is conveniently located at St John of God Hospital, Subiaco and Murdoch, with appointment times available from 8am - 5pm, Monday to Friday. Bookings for other examinations such as X-rays, Ultrasound, CT or MRI can usually be arranged to coincide with the day of your Nuclear Medicine test, for your convenience.

WHERE CAN I HAVE A NUCLEAR MEDICINE SCAN?

MURDOCH

St John of God Medical Clinic
100 Murdoch Drive, Murdoch
(entrance off Barry Marshall Parade)
T: 9333 9200 Fax: 9333 9286

SUBIACO

St John of God Subiaco Hospital
12 Salvado Road, Subiaco
T: 9286 6400 Fax: 9286 6481

YOUR GUIDE TO

NUCLEAR MEDICINE



WHAT IS NUCLEAR MEDICINE?

Nuclear Medicine is a branch of diagnostic imaging that uses very small amounts of radioactive material, or tracers, to provide information about the function or structure of particular organs such as your heart, lungs, bones or liver. The radioactive tracer localises in specific parts of your body and emits radiation. The radiation is detected by a gamma camera and a computer processes the images. Nuclear Medicine allows doctors to make a relatively quick, accurate diagnosis regarding a wide range of medical and surgical conditions.

IS NUCLEAR MEDICINE SAFE?

The amount of radioactive tracer used is very small and the radiation dose is similar to that of diagnostic radiology tests (e.g. CT scans). Most of the radioactive tracer leaves the body through the urine. Any retained material loses its radioactivity relatively quickly through natural breakdown (decay). There are little or no side-effects from the radioactive tracer and only a very small chance of an allergic reaction. Please tell the Nuclear Medicine Technologist or the doctor of any allergies prior to your examination.

WHAT PREPARATION IS REQUIRED?

Generally preparation is not required, but occasionally you will be asked to fast or hydrate prior to the scan. This will depend on the type of Nuclear Medicine scan that is being done.

SKG Radiology will provide you with further information regarding any necessary preparation and will give you specific instructions prior to your scan. Unless otherwise stated, you may drink and eat as usual.

It is recommended that you check with either your referring doctor or SKG Radiology staff if you can take your usual medications prior to a scan of your heart.

WHAT IS A NUCLEAR MEDICINE SCAN LIKE?

The test will be performed by a Nuclear Medicine Technologist. You will usually receive an injection of a small amount of radioactive tracer. Depending on the procedure, you may need to inhale or ingest the tracer.

Images will be taken using a machine called a gamma camera. Sometimes these images are obtained shortly after your injection, while at other times they are obtained after a delay of a few hours while your body absorbs the tracer.

If there is an interval after the injection prior to your delayed imaging, you may be able to leave the department during this time (for example for a bone scan). Our Technologists will advise you what time you will need to return and any instructions you will need to follow at your initial appointment time.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE SCAN?

Following completion of your scan, the Nuclear Medicine Imaging Specialist will report on the images. The results and images may be collected at a later time and the written report will be sent to your doctor electronically and/or by fax.

