

Your Visit to the Nuclear Medicine Department

Information and advice for patients

Nuclear Medicine

General Information

Address: Midland Metropolitan University Hospital, Grove Lane, B66 2QT

Tel – 0121 507 4427 (main office)

Where is the department located?

All patients and visitors will first need to head to level 5, and from here proceed towards lift D at the back right of the building (same side as M&S). Take lift D down to level 2 and you will see the Nuclear Medicine reception desk when exiting the lift lobby.

What is involved?

For most tests (but not all), the radioactivity is injected into a vein in your arm or hand. Other tests involve a radioactive tablet or meal. Depending on the type of test, you may have some pictures taken immediately or you may be asked to return at a given time later that day. For most tests, you will need to lie on a bed, staying still. The camera will be quite close to you. You do not normally need to take off your clothes and after the test you can go home.

How much radiation is involved?

The amount of radiation you receive is very small, similar to that from a CT scan. Many of our tests use radiation levels comparable with a year's worth of background radiation levels within the UK.

Can I bring a friend/relative with me?

Due to limited space in our waiting room, we ask that patients attend appointments alone where possible. If you require support from a family member or friend, they will also be receiving a small radiation dose by being in the presence of other patients who are also radioactive. Pregnant women and children should not attend the nuclear medicine department unnecessarily.

Will it hurt?

Most tests require an injection – you will be aware of the “pin-prick” of the needle, just as with a blood test. Most tests require the patient to lie down quite flat on our imaging bed – if this will be uncomfortable for you, you may wish to bring some painkillers to your appointment.

How long does the test take?

Please read the details in your appointment letter. Different tests require different waiting and scanning times, from a few minutes to a few hours. It may be that other patients who arrive after you will have their pictures sooner than you for this reason.

Do I need to prepare for the test?

Please read the details in your appointment letter. Some tests require you to fast before the procedure, or maybe stop taking certain drugs or caffeine. Your appointment letter will have instructions if needed, or may ask you to call us with a list of your medications so we can check them.

What about pregnancy?

Please tell us before your test if you are pregnant or if you think you may be pregnant; some tests may need to be delayed. Everyone between 12 and 55 years old will be asked to complete a form to document their pregnancy status.

What about breast/chest feeding?

Some tests will require you to stop feeding your child for a short period, as the injections we use enter your milk. Please phone before your appointment so that we can advise you; this will allow you time to express milk in advance if possible.

Do I need to do anything after the scan?

Not usually. However, you may be asked to avoid prolonged close contact with children or anyone pregnant for 24 hours after the test. This may prevent you attending the cinema/ theatre that evening for example. If you have very young children who require a lot of care, you may wish to schedule your appointment for a day when another adult is available to assist with childcare.

Can I return to work after my scan?

Unless you work very closely with pregnant women or children, you will be able to return to work after your test.

What happens to the results of the scan?

The report and pictures are sent to the doctor who asked for the scan, this is often a doctor at the hospital rather than your GP.

I wear incontinence pads, do I need to do anything differently after the test?

For many of our tests, the kidneys and urinary pathway is how your body clears the injections. Let our staff know at your appointment if you wear pads – we may ask you to store them for a day or two before putting them out with your household rubbish. We also need to avoid patients placing used incontinence pads in bins around the hospital, bring them back to us in Nuclear Medicine to dispose of appropriately.

Further information

British Nuclear Medicine Society (2013) Patients and carers. Available at: <https://www.bnms.org.uk/page/PatientsCarers> [Website accessed 28 January 2025].

If you would like to suggest any amendments or improvements to this leaflet please contact SWB Library Services on ext 3587 or email swbh.library@nhs.net.



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