



Patient & Family Guide
2018

Nuclear Medicine Tests

Aussi disponible en français :
Examens en médecine nucléaire (FF85-1962)



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Nuclear Medicine Tests

What are nuclear medicine tests?

Nuclear medicine tests are used to diagnose diseases in various body systems. A very small, safe amount of radioactive material (radioisotope) is injected into a vein, swallowed, or breathed in. A special gamma camera may be used to take pictures of the radioactivity. For some tests, blood, urine (pee), or breath samples may be collected.

Who will do the test?

A technologist will do the test. A specially trained doctor (Nuclear Medicine physician) will read the results.

How do I get ready for the test?

- Only some tests need special preparation (for example, not eating or drinking). You will be given instructions, if needed.
- It is very important to tell the technologist if you may be pregnant, are breastfeeding, or have had any recent nuclear medicine procedures.

What should I wear and bring?

- › wear comfortable clothing without buttons or zippers
- › wear footwear that is easy to get on and off
- › leave all jewelry at home

- › bring a warm sweater without buttons or zippers in case it is cold
- › empty your pockets

How is the test done?

- The radioisotope will be injected into your vein, swallowed, or breathed in.
- If a picture is needed, the camera will be positioned over the area to be studied. You will have to stay very still for these pictures but you will not feel any discomfort.
- Urine, blood, or breath samples may be collected.

How long will the test take?

The amount of time depends on the type of test. It may be as short as 10 minutes or may take 2 hours or more. We can only give you approximate return times and imaging times. Keep this in mind when arranging your schedule. You may need to return more than once on more than one day to complete the pictures for your test.

How long will the radioisotope stay in my body?

This depends on the type of radioisotope used. Most radioisotopes do not last long and the radiation level drops off very quickly.

Will the radiation hurt me?

No. The dosage of the radioisotope is so low that it will not hurt you.

Are there any complications or side effects?

There are usually no side effects to the radioisotopes given for nuclear medicine tests. There are a few tests that require medication to get a more complete result. Rarely, these medications may cause a reaction in some patients. If any medications are needed for your test, you will be told about them before the test.

If you are not able to attend your appointment, please leave a message at 902-473-1595 so another patient can be booked in your time slot.

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Learn about other programs and services in your community: call 211 or visit <http://ns.211.ca>

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The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.