



Midland
Regional
Hospital
Tullamore

NUCLEAR MEDICINE INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

This information leaflet explains what happens when you have a nuclear medicine scan.

What is Nuclear Medicine?

Nuclear medicine uses radioactive materials/isotopes to produce unique pictures of the body's inner workings.

This lets us see how different organs are functioning. This allows diagnosis of disease at very early stages.



Are you
pregnant
or could
you be
pregnant?



If you are pregnant or if there is a possibility that you are pregnant please tell us prior to your appointment/ injection.

Pregnant women and young children/babies should not come with the patient to the Nuclear Medicine Dept.

What do Nuclear Medicine Scans Involve?

1

Injection

A nuclear medicine scan involves receiving an injection usually into a vein in the arm or hand. Different injections are used depending on which area of the body is being investigated.

2

Waiting time

Once you receive your injection the radiographer will tell you when your scan will take place. Some scans take place immediately following injection, but you will be required to return for the final part of scan 2-4 hrs later

3

Scan

For the actual scan patients are usually asked to lie on their back and a scanning camera will be placed close to your body, but won't touch you. It is very important that you stay still for the duration of the scan. Scans usually last between 5 to 30 minutes approximately, depending on the part of the body being examined.

Precautions/Aftercare

The injection can remain in the body anywhere from 24 to 72 hours depending on the isotope used. The radiographer will inform you on the length of time precautions should be followed. Even though the amount of radiation is very small, you should take the following precautions during this period.

1. Drink plenty of fluids and empty your bladder frequently. When using the toilet you should avoid spills, flush twice and wash your hands thoroughly.
2. If possible avoid close contact over long periods with pregnant women and young babies.
3. If you are a nursing mother, express and discard breast milk for the length of time the radiographer advises.

The doctor will report on your scan and the report will be sent to your referring doctor, usually within 10 days.