

Patient Preparation for Nuclear Imaging

Nuclear medicine uses very small amounts of radioactive material for diagnostic imaging, as well as for treatment of certain conditions. It allows radiologists to view functioning physiological processes over time, rather than simply what an area of the body looks like at a specific moment (think movie versus picture). There are several types of nuclear imaging exams and we have enclosed this list of preparations for you to follow based on the type of exam your doctor has ordered.

Bone Scan

- No special preparation is necessary.
- This exam requires two visits. The first will be approximately 30 minutes for the injection. Then you will return 3-4 hours later for delayed images that take about 30 minutes.

Renal Scan

- No special preparation is necessary unless your doctor ordered this exam to evaluate renal artery stenosis as a cause for hypertension.
- If your doctor ordered this exam to evaluate renal artery stenosis as a cause for hypertension, you will be required to be off any ACE inhibitor medication 48 hours prior to the exam. It may also require an additional day of testing.
- The exam takes 60 minutes to complete.

Gastric Emptying Scan

- Do not eat or drink after midnight, the night before your exam.
- If you have an allergy to eggs, please contact our office.
- The exam takes 4 hours to complete.

Hepatobiliary Scan (HIDA)

- Do not eat or drink for at least 4 hours before the test and do not take any pain medications.
- The exam takes approximately 2 to 4 hours to complete.

Radioiodine Treatment of Thyroid Disease

- No special preparation is necessary.
- This treatment requires a consultation office visit with a radiologist before treatment will be given, which lasts approximately 30 minutes.
- You will return on another day for a very short visit for the actual treatment.

Thyroid Uptake and Scan

- This is a two day test. On day one you will come in to take a radioactive pill. You will return the following day (20-26 hours later) for the scan. Each appointment takes about 30 minutes.
- If you take thyroid medications such as Levothyroxine, Synthroid, Armour, Levothroid or Levoxyl, you must be off them for six weeks before your scan.
- If you are taking PTU (propylthiouracil) or methimazole (Tapazol), you must be off these medications for one week before the scan.

Parathyroid Scan

- No special preparation is necessary.
- This is a two part test. The first appointment you will receive an injection of a radioactive tracer and then images will be taken. You will then return about 2 hours later for another set of images. The first appointment is 30 minutes. The second appointment is 60-90 minutes.

Thyroid Scan Only

- No special preparation is necessary.
- You will receive an injection of a radioactive tracer and then images will be taken.