

## INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

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# Undergoing an isotope thyroid scan (using <sup>123</sup>iodine)

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Your consultant has asked us to arrange an isotope scan of your thyroid gland. This is performed in our Nuclear Medicine department for many different kinds of thyroid problems.

The aim of this leaflet is to explain what you can expect when you come for your isotope scan.

### **What is nuclear medicine?**

Nuclear medicine is a method of taking images (pictures) of your body using a gamma camera and a tiny dose of a radioactive injection (or “radiopharmaceutical”).

We need to wait for the injection to reach the part of your body we are looking at before taking the pictures. This may take up to three hours.

### **What should I do if I cannot attend for the appointment?**

Please inform us as soon as possible on 01623 622515, extension 3284 or 3205, if you are unable to attend.

A special injection will be prepared for your scan and cannot be used on any other patient.

### **Am I suitable for an isotope scan?**

Most patients are suitable for an isotope scan. However, you **must** ring us on 01623 622515, extension 3284 or 3205 for advice if:

- You are pregnant
- There is any possibility that you may be pregnant
- You are breast feeding
- You weigh over 30 stones (200 kilos).

### **How do I prepare for this scan?**

- If you are on Thyroxine tablets, your consultant may ask you to stop taking them before the scan. If your consultant has not mentioned this to you, please call us for advice on 01623 622515, extension 3284 or 3205 as soon as you receive your appointment.
- If you are to have other x-rays or scans before your thyroid scan, please tell your doctor that you need to avoid injections containing iodine.

- Do not eat iodine rich foods for three days before your scan as these can spoil the scan. Iodine rich foods include:
  - Seafood (fish, shellfish, seaweed and so on).
  - Sea salt (ordinary table salt will not affect the scan).
  - Glacé cherries.
  - Cough medicines and throat sweets.
  - Vitamin and mineral supplements.

Please leave any valuables at home. You are responsible for all personal items you bring into hospital and the Trust cannot accept responsibility for their loss or damage.

### **What happens during the scan?**

You will need to report to the reception desk in the main x-ray department, which is near A&E. From there you will be directed to the Nuclear Medicine department.

You will be given an injection into your arm and then you will have to wait approximately three hours before your scan.

You will be required to lie on the imaging couch while the scan takes place. The gamma camera will be close to you, without touching, but you will never be totally enclosed.

The scan will take approximately 30 to 45 minutes.

### **Are there any risks to having an isotope scan?**

The benefit from the isotope scan outweighs the extremely small risk from radiation. The scan results will allow your consultant to make the correct treatment decision for you.

To avoid babies and children being exposed to unnecessary radiation, you should avoid prolonged contact with them for at least 12 hours after the injection

### **Can I drive after my scan?**

There is no restriction on driving after your scan.

### **How do I get the results?**

When your scan is finished no instant diagnosis can be made. The images produced are recorded digitally and reviewed and a report sent to your referring clinician.

These results will be discussed with you by your referring clinician. If you have been referred from the hospital and have not received your follow-up appointment within four weeks please contact your consultant's patient coordinator.

If you are unsure about anything concerning this procedure or require more information, please do not hesitate to call us on 01623 622515, extension 3284 or 3205.

## Further sources of information

NHS Choices: [www.nhs.uk/conditions](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions)

Our website: [www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk](http://www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk)

## Patient Experience Team (PET)

PET is available to help with any of your compliments, concerns or complaints, and will ensure a prompt and efficient service.

**King's Mill Hospital:** 01623 672222

**Newark Hospital:** 01636 685692

**Email:** [sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net](mailto:sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net)

If you would like this information in an alternative format, for example large print or easy read, or if you need help with communicating with us, for example because you use British Sign Language, please let us know. You can call the Patient Experience Team on 01623 672222 or email [sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net](mailto:sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net).

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant health professional would give you.

External websites may be referred to in specific cases. Any external websites are provided for your information and convenience. We cannot accept responsibility for the information found on them.

If you require a full list of references for this leaflet, please email [sfh-tr.patientinformation@nhs.net](mailto:sfh-tr.patientinformation@nhs.net) or telephone 01623 622515, extension 6927.

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