

INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

Undergoing an isotope parathyroid scan

We have been requested by your hospital doctor to arrange an isotope parathyroid scan. This study is performed in our Nuclear Medicine Department and enables us to identify functional problems of the parathyroid glands.

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

What is nuclear medicine?

Nuclear medicine is a method of imaging the body using a gamma camera and using radiopharmaceuticals (radioactive 'dyes').

To look at the function of the body, nuclear medicine uses gamma rays. These are very similar to x-rays except gamma rays are produced by a radiopharmaceutical dye injected into the bloodstream.

The radiation dose is kept as low as possible, similar to an x-ray dose, which means it may take quite a long time to create the images.

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 which 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 breastfeeding
- You weigh over 30 stones (200 kilos).

How do I prepare for an isotope scan?

If you are taking any medications for your parathyroid or thyroid glands, please inform the department immediately. The department will check your medication list and inform you if you need to stop anything.

You can eat and drink normally before and during the appointment.

Please let us know if you have had any iodinated contrast scans (e.g. CT scans) in the four weeks prior to your appointment.

What happens during the scan?

You should report to the reception desk in the main x-ray department adjacent to the Emergency Department. You will be directed to the Nuclear Medicine Department.

Procedure:

- You will be given an injection into a vein in your arm.
- After 15 minutes the first scan will take place.
- A parathyroid scan usually involves two injections using different types of radioactive isotope and one set of images. The gamma camera will be close to you, without touching, but you will never be totally enclosed.
- After the first injection there is a wait of two hours before the second injection can be given. This second injection is given prior to the scan being started. Between scans you will be able to eat and drink as normal.
- Occasionally, instead of the above, a parathyroid scan is performed using only one radioactive isotope injection with three sets of images being taken 10 minutes, two hours and potentially four hours after this injection. The staff will inform you on the day of the intervals between each scan.
- A series of images of your neck and chest will be taken and there will be a scan where the camera moves around a part of your body, followed by a CT scan. You should expect these images to take approximately an hour and it's important that throughout the scans you lie still.

Are there any risks to having an isotope scan?

The benefit from the isotope scan outweighs the 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, it is advisable to avoid prolonged contact with them for at least 12 hours following the injection.

Can I drive after my scan?

Yes, there is no restriction on driving after your scan.

How do I get the results?

All the images produced are reviewed by a consultant radiologist who is a doctor specialising in reporting this type of scan. You will then be sent an appointment to see your hospital doctor to discuss the results when they are available.

Contact details

If you have any concerns or require more information, please call 01623 622515, extension 3284 or 3205.

Your radiology records

This Trust is part of a group of NHS hospitals in the East Midlands that have a shared NHS radiology system, which is used by our healthcare professionals to access your radiology records.

If necessary, your radiology records may also be accessed by healthcare professionals in other NHS hospitals in the East Midlands or NHS Service Providers, to ensure you receive consistent, safe and effective clinical care and treatment, irrespective of where you receive your care.

If you have any concerns about providing information or how we use it, please discuss this with radiology staff so that you fully understand the potential impact on your care or treatment.

Further sources of information

NHS Choices: www.nhs.uk/conditions

Our website: 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

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.

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 (if relevant) for this leaflet, please email sfh-tr.patientinformation@nhs.net or telephone 01623 622515, extension 6927.

<p>To be completed by the Communications office Leaflet code: PIL202504-07-UIPS Created: November 2012 / Revised: April 2025 / Review Date: April 2027</p>
--