Patient Information Leaflet

HIDA Scan (Tc-99m)

Introduction

A HIDA scan is a nuclear medicine exam done to examine the function of your gallbladder and biliary system. During the scan you will be asked to drink a small bottle of cream. You will be required to stay in the department for approximately 1.5 hours.

Preparation

You must fast for at least 6 hours prior to the scan.
Inform us of any medications you are taking as some may need to be stopped for the scan.
The injection will not impair your ability to drive a vehicle.
Pregnant women or children should not attend the appointment with you.
Ensure you are well hydrated.

Women of childbearing age

This scan should be scheduled within 28 days of the commencement of your last menstrual period to avoid inadvertent irradiation of a foetus. If your period is overdue, your appointment may be rearranged.

Scan

On arrival you will be asked to lie on the scanner table. You will be given the isotope injection into a vein in your arm. This injection should have no side effects. The scan will take 45 minutes.

You will then be asked to sit up and drink a small bottle of cream. This encourages your gallbladder to contract. Following this, you will need to walk around for approximately 20 minutes.

Finally, you will be asked to lie down on the scanner table again for the last scan. This will take fifteen minutes.

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Radiation precautions after the scan

Some of the isotope will remain in your body for approximately 24 hours after your scan is complete. To minimise the radiation dose to yourself and others, you should take the following precautions during this period:

1. Drink plenty of fluids and empty your bladder as frequently as possible. When using the toilet you should avoid spills, flush the toilet twice and wash your hands thoroughly. You should sit on the toilet when passing urine.

2. If possible, avoid close contact with pregnant women, infants and children for 24 hours after your injection.

3. If you are a nursing mother express and discard breast milk for 24 hours after your injection. You may resume normal breast-feeding after this time.

4. You should postpone any other medical tests or rocedures for 24 hours after the injection where possible.

Medical radiation: risks v benefits

We are all exposed to natural background radiation every day. Medical exposures give a small additional dose on top of natural radiation.

The amount of radiation received during a nuclear medicine procedure is low, resulting in the equivalent of approximately a few months to two year's background radiation.

The only effect on the patient that is known to be possible at these low doses is a very slight increase in the chance of cancer occurring many years or decades after the exposure.

As long as it is clearly necessary to help make the correct diagnosis and treatment decision, the benefits of detection, diagnosis and treatment resulting from the nuclear medicine examination should outweigh these small radiation risks.