

MIBG scan

This fact sheet tells you what a MIBG scan is, and what is involved. Please read it before having your scan. If you have any questions, ask your doctor.

What is a MIBG scan?

A MIBG is a nuclear medicine scan. It uses a small amount of a radiopharmaceutical (radioactive tracer), which is injected into a vein in your arm to find some types of cancer in the body, particularly cancers which affect nerve tissue called neuroblastomas.

MIBG stands for metaiodobenzylguanidine.

Procedure

You will be given instructions on how to prepare for your scan. You might need to stop taking certain medications and will be asked to take some iodine drops before you have the injections. This is to protect your thyroid gland.

You should tell your doctor and the imaging staff if you have any allergies, are pregnant, think you may be pregnant or are breastfeeding.

A special gamma camera will take pictures of your body. This is usually done four hours after the injection but can be up to 24 hours after the injection. The scan does not hurt, but it might be uncomfortable as you have to lie still for the test. You will need to come back again the next day to be scanned again.

A child might be given a sedative or anaesthetic before the scan to keep them calm and still.

After the procedure

A nuclear medicine physician (a specialist doctor) will assess the images and send the results to your referring doctor. You should not have any issues after the scan.

Risks involved

While all nuclear medicine tests involve some exposure to radiation, the amount is very small and the risk of side effects is very low. Allergic reactions are very rare and almost always minor.

If you need sedation or anaesthetic, there are some risks which your doctor will explain before you have the scan.

For more information

Nuclear medicine: Answering your questions by the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation: www.ansto.gov.au/cs/groups/corporate/documents/webcontent/mdaw/mdax/~edisp/acstest_038604.pdf

InsideRadiology by the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologists: www.insideradiology.com.au

Children's Cancer: Medical imaging by Cancer Australia: childrenscancer.canceraustralia.gov.au/about-childrens-cancer/how-cancer-diagnosed/medical-imaging

The Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency: www.arpansa.gov.au

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