

Nuclear medicine procedures

This fact sheet is designed to provide general information about nuclear medicine procedures and inform you of what is involved. Please read it before your procedure. If you have any questions, ask your doctor.

What is a nuclear medicine procedure?

A nuclear medicine procedure involves giving you a small amount of radioactive medication. This makes parts of your body slightly radioactive for a short time. A special nuclear medicine camera looks at the radiation from your body, and takes pictures of how the inside of your body is working.

The radioactive material is usually injected into your blood stream through a vein, but might be given in other ways. Many different parts of the body can be looked at, depending on the type of radioactive medication used. It can also be used to show changes to a known problem after any treatment you might have had.

Procedure

You will be given instructions on how to prepare for your scan. You may need to stop eating or stop taking certain medications before the scan.

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

The time taken will vary, depending on your test.

After the procedure

A nuclear medicine physician (a specialist doctor) looks at the images and sends the results to your treating 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. The risk of side effects is very low. Allergic reactions are very rare and almost always minor.

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

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

The Alliance for Radiation Safety in Pediatric Imaging: www.imagegently.org

Choosing Wisely Australia: www.choosingwisely.org.au/resources/consumers/5-questions-to-ask-your-doctor

For more information, please contact:

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