

DMSA scan

Patient information factsheet

What is a Nuclear Medicine Scan?

- A nuclear medicine scan is a very common medical procedure.
- It uses small amounts of radioactive materials to show a specific organ.
- This helps your Doctor diagnose (find the problem) and, in some cases, treat some diseases.
- The scan uses a gamma camera to look for signs of disease. A gamma camera is a medical imaging device used to take pictures of what's happening inside the body.
- It shows the Doctor how well your organs are working. Other types of scans show what your organs look like.

What is a DMSA Scan?

- DMSA is a radioactive medicine. It is injected into a vein, and it allows pictures to be taken of the kidneys.
- DMSA goes into the kidneys and collects in healthy tissue. This helps show how well the kidneys are working.
- It does not show the inside structure of the kidneys.
- The radioactive material gives off gamma rays. Special cameras use these rays to take pictures of the kidneys.
- In **children**, this test is often used to check for kidney damage from past infections or signs of a current infection (pyelonephritis). **Please arrive 2 hours before the appointment time so that a cannula can be placed.**
- In **adults**, this test is used to look for kidney scars. It can check how well each kidney works. It is also used when planning kidney surgery or treatments like radiotherapy.

Do I have to do anything to prepare for this procedure?

- Yes. You must drink plenty of water between the injection and the scan.
- In children, nappies must be changed more often after the injection.
- You can take your usual medicines and can eat normally for this test.
- **Scan for children:**
 - Nappies must be changed more often after the injection.
 - You can bring your child's favourite toy or a tablet/iPad to help keep them busy during the test.

What happens on the day of the scan?

On arrival

- Please come to the Imaging department to book in for the scan.
- A small tube (cannula) will be put into your vein to allow the injection to be given.
- **Scan for children:** You will be asked to take your child to Rose's Day Unit or IFOR ward to have the cannula put in and then go back to the Imaging department.

After cannulation

- At the Imaging department, a radioactive tracer will be injected into the inserted cannula.
- The radioactive tracer will allow us to see your kidneys under our special camera.
- You can leave the department after this.

2 to 3 hours after the injection

- You will be asked to come back to the Imaging department after 2 to 3 hours to scan your kidneys.
- The entire scan can take about 30 minutes.
- If your child needs a scan, we usually prefer them to be asleep for it.
- If possible, please get the child to take a nap.
- It is important that the person having the scan keeps still during the procedure.

Is it dangerous?

- The scans are safe and painless.
- Only a tiny amount of radioactive tracer is used, so the risk from radiation is very small.
- If you have any worries or questions about the scan, please talk to your Doctor or contact the Nuclear Medicine department.

Is there anything you need to tell us before the scan?

- Before your appointment, tell the Nuclear Medicine Technologist or Radiographer if you might be pregnant or are breastfeeding.
- **You might need to stop breastfeeding for a short time after your scan.**
- Please tell us if you are very afraid of needles (needle phobia), feel anxious in small spaces (claustrophobia), or cannot lie down flat.
- **For children:** Please let us know if there may be any potty-training issues or if you have any concerns on whether your child will tolerate the procedure.

What happens after the scan?

- Drink lots of water.
- The radioactive tracer leaves your body through your pee (urine). Drinking lots of water will help get rid of it faster.
- **Do not have any blood or urine tests for 24 hours after your scan because the radioactive tracer may still be in your body.**

How do I get my result?

- A Radiologist reviews (looks at) the scan and sends the report to the Specialist Doctor who asked for it. They will then contact you directly.
- This can take about 2 to 3 weeks.

Is there anything else I should know?

- You will need to lie down flat and stay still during the scan. Moving can make the pictures unclear.

- The scan can take anywhere from 15 to 60 minutes. This will depend on the type of procedure you are having.
- A CT scan (computerized tomography) might be done at the same time as your nuclear medicine scan to give us extra information.
- **Please do not bring anyone with you who is pregnant or under 18 years old.** This is because there are radioactive materials in the department.
- **We do not allow anyone under 18** to interpret for patients.
- If you need an interpreter, please tell the Nuclear Medicine department, and they will arrange one for you.

Contact our service

Email: whh-tr.nuclearmedwhitthealth@nhs.net

Monday to Thursday, 9am to 5pm: 020 7288 5517.

Friday: Please call our mobile on 07747 037 143.

Contact our Trust

If you have a compliment, complaint or concern, please contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on **020 7288 5551** or whh-tr.PALS@nhs.net.

If you need a large print, audio or translated copy of this leaflet, please email whh-tr.patient-information@nhs.net. We will try our best to meet your needs.

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