

Hepatobiliary (HIDA) 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 HIDA Scan?

- A hepatobiliary (HIDA) scan is a test that takes pictures to check the liver, gallbladder, and bile ducts for problems.
- For a HIDA scan (also called cholescintigraphy or hepatobiliary scintigraphy), a small amount of radioactive tracer is injected into a vein in your arm.
- The tracer gives off a tiny signal that the scanner can pick up.
- The tracer moves through your blood to your liver. The liver takes it in and sends it into the bile.
- It then travels to your gallbladder, through the bile ducts, and into your small intestine.
- A gamma camera tracks the flow of the tracer from your liver into your gallbladder and small intestine and creates computer images.

Why might I need a HIDA scan?

- To check how well your gallbladder is working (biliary dyskinesia) if you have ongoing stomach pain that may be linked to your gallbladder.
- To look for a biliary leak – when bile, a digestive liquid made by the liver, leaks out of the bile ducts or gallbladder instead of flowing into the intestine.
- To look for a stent blockage – when a stent (a small tube placed in the body to keep a duct or vessel open) becomes blocked.

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

- You must fast from midnight the night before (no food or drink, including water). **You must fast for at least 4 hours before the scan.**
- You must not be on Total Parenteral Nutrition (TPN). TPN is when food and nutrients are given directly into a vein instead of being eaten or drunk.
- **You must not take any opiate medications within 24 hours before test.** Opiate medications are mainly used to relieve moderate to severe pain.

What happens on the day of the scan?

On arrival

- The radioactive tracer will be injected into a vein while you lie down on the imaging bed.
- This radioactive tracer will allow us to see your liver and gall bladder using our special camera.
- The scan will be started right after the injection.
- We will continue taking images for 1 hour.

At 1 hour

- The images taken of you will be looked at, and the rest of the scan will depend on what the doctors see.
- In most cases, you will be given a fatty drink and we will do another scan, which lasts around 45 minutes.

- In other cases, we may need to take more images 4 hours and 24 hours afterwards.

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 you come to 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.

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.
- **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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