

Parathyroid 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 (radioactive tracer) 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 Parathyroid Scan?

- A parathyroid MIBI scan is a nuclear medicine test.
- It is used to check for problems with the parathyroid glands.
- The parathyroids are four very small glands. They sit near the thyroid gland at the front of the neck.
- The parathyroid scan uses Sestamibi (a radioactive tracer). This is a safe liquid radioactive material.
- It is injected into the body and is absorbed by the overactive parathyroid. It is not absorbed by healthy parathyroids.
- An overactive gland makes too much hormone. The scan can see this gland on pictures taken by a gamma camera.
- High blood calcium and hormone levels can mean a parathyroid problem.
- Finding the overactive gland helps the surgeon locate the growth. This makes the surgery easier and quicker.

- This means the surgeon can do a smaller (minimally invasive) surgery instead of a large open one.

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

- **Stop taking Cinacalcet two weeks before your appointment date.**

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 visualise your parathyroid glands under our special camera
- The scan will be started right after the injection.
- This first scan may last up to 30 minutes.

1.5 hours after injection

- A second set of images called the Delayed scan will be taken at this time.
- This may take up to 45 minutes.
- It is important that you keep still during imaging.

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.

Are there any precautions?

- 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.
- A CT scan (computerised 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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Document information

Date published: 18/02/2026 | Review date: 18/02/2028 | Ref: ACW/Imag/ParathyrScan/02

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