

## INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

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# Undergoing an isotope thyroid scan

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We have been requested by your hospital doctor to arrange an isotope thyroid scan.

This study is performed in our Nuclear Medicine department and enables us to identify many different thyroid problems.

The aim of this leaflet is to explain what you can expect when you come for your nuclear medicine scan.

### **What is nuclear medicine?**

Nuclear medicine is a method of imaging the body using a gamma camera and using radiopharmaceuticals (radioactive 'dyes').

To look at the function of the body, nuclear medicine uses gamma rays. These are very similar to x-rays except gamma rays are produced by a radiopharmaceutical dye injected into the bloodstream.

The radiation dose is kept as low as possible, similar to an x-ray dose, which means it may take quite a long time to create the images.

### **What should I do if I cannot attend for the appointment?**

Please inform us as soon as possible on 01623 622515, extension 3284 or 3205, if you are unable to attend. A special injection will be prepared for your scan, which cannot be used on any other patient.

### **Am I suitable for an isotope scan?**

Most patients are suitable for an isotope scan. However, you must contact us on 01623 622515, extension 3284 or 3205 for advice if:

- You are pregnant
- There is any possibility that you may be pregnant
- You are breastfeeding
- You weigh over 30 stones (200 kilos).

### **How do I prepare for this scan?**

If you are on thyroid hormone replacement, your consultant may ask you to stop taking it before the scan.

If your consultant has not mentioned this to you, please call us on 01623 622515, extension 3284 or 3205 as soon as you receive your appointment for advice.

To help us to get clearer images, do not eat iodine rich foods for three days before your scan. Iodine rich foods include:

- Seafood (fish, shellfish, seaweed etc)
- Sea salt - ordinary table salt will not affect the scan
- Glace cherries
- Cough medicines and throat sweets
- Vitamin and mineral supplements.

Please leave any valuables at home. You are responsible for all personal items you bring into hospital and the Trust cannot accept responsibility for their loss or damage.

### **What happens during the scan?**

You will need to report to the reception desk in the main x-ray department, which is near to the Emergency Department. From there you will be directed to the Nuclear Medicine department.

You will be given an injection into your arm and then you will need to wait 15 to 20 minutes before your scan.

You will be required to lie on the imaging couch while the scan takes place.

The gamma camera will be close to you, without touching, but you will never be totally enclosed.

The scan will take approximately 30 minutes.

### **Are there any risks to having an isotope scan?**

The benefit from the isotope scan outweighs the small risk from radiation.

The scan results will allow your consultant to make the correct treatment decision for you.

To avoid babies and children being exposed to unnecessary radiation, it is good practice to avoid prolonged contact with them for at least 12 hours following the injection.

### **Can I drive after my scan?**

Yes, there is no restriction on driving after your scan.

### **How do I get the results?**

When your scan is finished no instant diagnosis can be made. The images produced are recorded digitally and reviewed and a report sent to your referring clinician.

These results will be discussed with you by your referring clinician. If you have been referred from the hospital and have not received your follow-up appointment within four weeks please contact your consultant's patient coordinator.

If you have any concerns or require more information, please call 01623 622515, extension 3284 or 3205.

## Further sources of information

NHS Choices: [www.nhs.uk/conditions](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions)

Our website: [www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk](http://www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk)

## Patient Experience Team (PET)

PET is available to help with any of your compliments, concerns or complaints, and will ensure a prompt and efficient service.

**King's Mill Hospital:** 01623 672222

**Newark Hospital:** 01636 685692

**Email:** [sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net](mailto:sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net)

If you would like this information in an alternative format, for example large print or easy read, or if you need help with communicating with us, for example because you use British Sign Language, please let us know. You can call the Patient Experience Team on 01623 672222 or email [sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net](mailto:sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net).

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant health professional would give you.

External websites may be referred to in specific cases. Any external websites are provided for your information and convenience. We cannot accept responsibility for the information found on them.

If you require a full list of references for this leaflet, please email [sfh-tr.patientinformation@nhs.net](mailto:sfh-tr.patientinformation@nhs.net) or telephone 01623 622515, extension 6927.

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