



FACT SHEET

The Niagara Health System is pleased to provide you with general information about your upcoming exam.

WHAT IS NUCLEAR MEDICINE?

Nuclear medicine refers to a medicine that is attached to a radioactive material called a radiopharmaceutical. There are many different radiopharmaceuticals that can be used to look at different parts of the body. For most nuclear medicine studies you will be given an injection of the radiopharmaceutical. Other radiopharmaceuticals may be taken orally or inhaled. A special camera is then used to take pictures. Most pictures are taken while you are lying down in a comfortable position with the camera very close to your body.

WHAT IS NUCLEAR MEDICINE USED FOR?

Nuclear Medicine is used to detect diseases in many parts of the body, including the bones, thyroid, lungs, heart, and kidneys.

HOW DO I PREPARE FOR MY NUCLEAR MEDICINE STUDY?

Your doctor will receive the information that you need to know to prepare for the test. Please call your doctor for that information. If you are female and of child bearing age it is best to have your nuclear medicine study during the first 10 days after your period starts.

WHAT IF I COULD BE PREGNANT OR IF I AM BREASTFEEDING?

Please tell the Medical Radiation Technologist if it is possible that you are pregnant or if you are breast feeding. The test may have to be either modified or delayed.

Describe any breast problems to the Medical Radiation Technologist.

WHAT SHOULD I BRING TO MY APPOINTMENT?

Please bring your Ontario Health Card and a list of your current medications.

Please note that the Niagara Health System is a scent-free environment.

WHAT HAPPENS DURING THE TEST?

The Medical Radiation Technologist will explain the test to you.

- ask you to remove any jewelry or metal objects
- have you remove clothing depending on the study
- give you the radiopharmaceutical
- take pictures with a special camera

ARE THE RADIOPHARMACEUTICALS SAFE?

Yes, reactions to radiopharmaceuticals are rare and usually minor. Please notify the Medical Radiation Technologist if you feel anything after an injection.

IS THE RADIATION SAFE?

The radiation exposure is very low and poses little risk. Your physician has determined that the benefits of undergoing the nuclear medicine study outweigh the risks of the study.

HOW LONG WILL THE STUDY TAKE?

Depending on the type of study you are having, your pictures may take from 20 minutes to 2 hours. You may be asked to return for pictures later in the day, or on another day.

WHO REPORTS MY PICTURES?

The pictures are reported by specially trained doctors. The results are sent to your doctor.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE STUDY?

The Medical Radiation Technologist will provide you with any special instructions after the study.

