

Directions

- All Nuclear Medicine scans are performed in the **Bristol Royal Infirmary**. Please come to the main reception in the X-ray Department, on level 2 of the BRI.
- If you require information on travel, please contact the Family Information Room on 0117 342 8065.

What is a Nuclear Medicine scan?

- A very small amount of radioactivity is used to obtain pictures of the inside of your child's body. This will help the doctors to understand the nature and extent of your child's illness.

What is involved?

- Your child will be given a small amount of radioactive tracer (usually a small amount of liquid). For most scans this needs to be injected into a vein. A very sensitive camera (called a gamma camera) is then used to take pictures. Depending on the type of scan, these pictures may be taken immediately after the radioactive tracer has been given, or after a wait of several hours.
- During the scan your child will need to lie **very** still on a bed. You will be able to stay with them and they will not need to get undressed. After your child's scan has been completed you will be informed when you may leave the department.

Special precautions

Mothers or carers who are **pregnant** should not accompany their child to the Nuclear Medicine Department. If this presents problems, the nuclear medicine staff **must** be contacted so that special arrangements can be made. (Please telephone the Nuclear Medicine Department on 0117 342 2671.)

Please try not to bring other children with you to the Nuclear Medicine Department.

Helping to prepare your child for the scan

All children will need some preparation for their scan. **It is important that all the instructions in the appointment letter are followed carefully.**

It is advisable to bring some food and drinks for both you and your child. Also, please bring your child's special comforter with you (however old and tatty it looks!) and anything else that you think might help to keep him / her happy.

On Thursdays we have staff from the children's hospital who will help prepare younger children for their scan.

When your child arrives in the Nuclear Medicine Department we like to give them a few minutes to settle into their new environment. The younger children will be seen in our small playroom.

The nurse or radiographer will take some details about your child and explain what is going to happen during the day. Usually we put some local anaesthetic cream onto a vein in their hands or arms (sometimes feet in babies). This cream needs to stay on for about an hour for it to numb the area for the injection, so that there is little or no discomfort.

Helping to keep your child still for the scan

- The nurse or radiographer will discuss the best way of trying to keep your child still while they have their scan. It is easier if young children have a natural sleep while they are being scanned. We only sedate children in **very** rare circumstances.
- However, it is surprising how many children will lie still for their scan with encouragement and distraction. For children older than 2½ years, this is usually most successful if they understand what is expected of them and they have had a few short practices at home before they come into hospital. For further information on this, please contact the Family Information Room on 0117 342 8065.
- If your child is not having a natural sleep during their scan we will need to try to prevent them from becoming bored and restless. Children can usually be kept still and amused by watching a favourite video or DVD from home (or one of ours), listening to a tape or a story. Having something which they can eat or drink lying down (unless this isn't allowed for their particular type of scan) may also help.

Is the test safe?

- The radiation dose your child receives is very low and is often less than from some ordinary x-rays.

Will it hurt?

- The only uncomfortable part is having the injection, but this is alleviated by having the special cream on. All the staff are trained in the use of this special cream, which will help reduce any discomfort.
- As the camera won't even touch your child the scan itself is completely painless.
- However, if your child has a particular fear of hospitals or needles, please phone the Nuclear Medicine Department to discuss this with us as soon as possible on 0117 342 2671.

How long will it take?

- We need to prepare your child, wait for the radioactive tracer to reach the right area and to complete all the scans. This usually takes 3 - 8 hours. However, it may be possible to go into town for 1 - 2 hours before the final scan.
- We try to keep all waiting times in the department as short as possible. However, it may sometimes appear that children are not being seen in the order, or at the time that you would expect. This is because certain types of scan have to take priority as their timing is more critical. Delays can also occur if in-patient emergency scans need to be done urgently.
- As we cannot guarantee that your child's scans will be finished by 3:30 pm, please make arrangements for someone else to collect any other children from school.

What happens after the scan?

- If your child is taking medicines please continue to give them as usual, unless you have been told otherwise.
- Your child should not be in close, prolonged contact with other children or pregnant women for the next 24 hours but **normal contact is fine**. You will receive more information on the day of the scan.
- Your child's urine will be very slightly radioactive for 24 hours following their scan. Therefore it is advisable for anyone who comes into contact with it, to wash his or her hands very carefully.
- Nappies should be put in an outside bin if possible and not into a bin in a room that is used for long periods of time. Any wet clothing or bedding should be put into a plastic bag and then into a utility room or bathroom and not a living room or bedroom. After 24 hours any radiation will have "broken down" so the clothing can then be washed as normal. Do not wash items immediately. There is no need to wash items separately.

Will there be any after-effects?

- After-effects are **very** rare. However, if your child becomes unwell or you are worried about them in the 24 hours following the scan, please phone the Nuclear Medicine Department (Monday to Friday between 8:30am – 5:00pm) on 0117 342 2671.
- Outside of the above hours, please seek other medical advice from your GP or NHS Direct on 0845 4647.

How will I find out the results of this scan?

If your child does not already have an outpatient appointment with the consultant who requested this scan, you will normally be contacted in the next few weeks. Your consultant will generally have the results within 2 weeks.

If after 3 - 4 weeks you have not received the results by phone or letter **and** have not received a date for an outpatient appointment, please phone the secretary of the consultant who requested this scan.

If your child's consultant works at the Bristol Royal Hospital for Children phone **0117 923 0000** (weekdays 9:00am – 5:00pm) and ask for the consultant's secretary.

Any more questions?

If you want any more information please contact us on the telephone number below:

Nuclear Medicine Department 0117 342 2671

(Monday – Friday between 8:30am – 5:00pm)

**Nuclear Medicine Department
Suite F
Department of Clinical Radiology
Level 2
Bristol Royal Infirmary**