



A lifetime of specialist care

Nuclear medicine DMSA kidney scan – appointment information

Points to remember

- Please telephone us on 01895 828880 as soon as you receive this letter if you need to cancel or change the appointment date of your scan.
- You do not need to make any special preparations for this scan, but please drink plenty of fluids (such as water) before and after the injection.

What is nuclear medicine?

Nuclear medicine is a special way of taking images of your body. Before we can take these images, we need to give you an injection containing a tracer. This is a substance with a small amount of radioactivity that highlights the part of the body we need to see in more detail.

About your DMSA scan

This scan looks at how well your kidneys are functioning. We will give you a tracer injection and wait three hours before we do your scan. This is to give the tracer time to reach your kidneys. The scan is named after a chemical in the tracer called 'de mercapto succinic acid' or DMSA for short.

To have your scan, you will lie on the scanning couch above the camera while it takes images, for about 40 minutes. It is important that you keep still during this time.

How long will the appointment take?

You will be with us for up to four hours to complete the test.

Is there any risk from the radiation?

The amount of radiation used in a DMSA scan is small and kept to a minimum. We believe that the benefits of having the test far outweigh any risks. To avoid exposing children unnecessarily to radiation, please do not bring them with you to the department. Please ask if you have any questions.

Female patients

You should not have this scan if you are pregnant, think you may be pregnant, or are breastfeeding.

Diabetics

You do not need to change your diet or treatment. Please bring your insulin and any snacks as needed.

Are there any side effects?

The substance we give you does not have any side effects. It will not make you sleepy or stop you from driving a car.

After your scan

You can eat and drink as usual and continue with your normal daily activities after your scan. You may go anywhere you like, but please try to avoid long periods of close contact with children for the next 24 hours. This is to avoid exposing them to unnecessary radiation.

Results

We will send the results of your scan to the hospital consultant who asked for the test.

Additional information

Please note that our nuclear medicine department scans many people every day. We try to keep to your appointment time as closely as possible, but should you be late, or if there is an emergency at the hospital, it may not be possible to perform your scan immediately.

Hospital transport

If you need hospital transport to get to us, please ask your GP to arrange this.

Private patients

If you are a private patient please bring your private insurance details to your appointment, otherwise, please pay your invoice on the day of your scan.

How to find us

The nuclear medicine department is in the ANZAC Centre, ground floor, Harefield Hospital.

Useful contacts

If you have any questions about your scan, please call us on 01895 828 880, Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 4.30pm.

If you need help or advice about any service or department at our hospitals, and feel unable to talk to those people responsible for your care, call the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 020 7349 7715 or email pals@rbht.nhs.uk. This is a confidential service.