

Nuclear Medicine

Gastric Emptying study

This leaflet will help you get ready for your visit to the Nuclear Medicine Department. Please read the information and call us if you have any questions. We are happy to help.

What is a gastric emptying study?

A gastric emptying study helps to see how quickly food leaves your stomach. For the test, you'll eat a small meal that contains a radioactive medicine. A special camera then takes pictures of your stomach over a few hours to track how fast the food moves through your digestive system. This helps diagnose issues like delayed stomach emptying, which can cause symptoms like nausea or bloating. The meal is made up of egg whites, toast, and jam.

Please call us as soon as possible if:

- You are pregnant or think you may be pregnant
- You are breastfeeding
- You are insulin-dependent diabetic
- You are currently taking medication for your stomach
- You have an allergy or intolerance to one of the meal ingredients
- You need any special help
- You will be using ambulance transport to attend your appointment is after midday
- You don't live in your own private home, like a care home



Patient Information

Telephone: 02476 968212

Monday to Friday: 9am to 5pm

How should you prepare?

- Do not eat for 4 hours before your appointment.
- Only drink water in the 4 hours before your appointment.
- If you are a diabetic, please bring your medication and something to eat with you for the end of the test.
- Let us know if you are taking medication for your stomach (for example metoclopramide, tegaserod, domperidone or erythromycin). You may need to stop these medications, but we will let you know for how long after we talk to the doctor who referred you for this test.

Please plan to be at your appointment for 5 hours.

What will happen when you come for your test?

When you arrive, we will ask you about the medications you are taking (please bring an up-to-date list), and we will check that you have fasted for 4 hours. If you are diabetic, we may check your blood sugars before and after the meal.

You will then need to eat the meal which contains the radioactive medicine. You should eat as much of it as you can and as quickly as you can. You will then need to stand between two special detectors called a gamma camera. You will need to keep as still as possible for 5 minutes whilst the picture is taken, but you can breathe normally.

You will need to have pictures taken after 10 minutes, 1 hour, 2 hours, 3 hours, and 4 hours after the meal. Each picture will take 5 minutes.

Do not eat or drink until all the pictures have been taken and checked.

What happens after the images are taken?

You will be asked to wait for a few minutes whilst your images are checked. You will be told when this is completed and when you can leave.

Patient Information

The study takes some time to process so we are not able to discuss the results with you. The Doctor who requested the scan usually receives the results within 10 working days.

What else do you need to know?

You may be given one of two medicines depending on what we have available but they both work for the test in the same way.

This first medicine is made from human serum albumin, which comes from human blood donations tested to meet EEC Regulations. It has been tested to make sure it is safe.

The second medicine that may be used in the test is an unlicensed medicine.

In the UK, medicines are approved for use by the UK's governing body for medicines, the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA). They check medicines are safe, work well and are of good quality. An unlicensed medicine is any medicine used without full approval from the MHRA. This could mean using a medicine for another use different to its usual purpose or using a medicine approved in another country.

You have been prescribed an unlicensed medicine because there is not a fully approved alternative available. Your doctors have thought carefully about giving you this medicine to make sure it's the best option for you, and they will monitor you closely to make sure it is safe.

How much radiation will you receive?

This examination exposes you to ionising radiation. The amount of radiation is 3.8 mSv(millisievert). 3.8 mSv is about the same amount of natural radiation you get living in the UK for 511 days.

Your doctor has recommended this scan because the benefit outweighs the very low risk of harm. The risk of getting cancer because of this

Patient Information

radiation is around 19 in 1000 people. This is very small compared with the 1 in 2 risk of someone getting cancer naturally in their lifetime.

Directions and car parking

The Nuclear Medicine department is a short walk from the main entrance on the ground floor. When you enter the hospital through the main entrance, turn left to go into the West wing. Follow the signs for X-ray along the corridor, and you'll find X-ray on the left, just after the Fracture Clinic. Go to the X-ray reception and walk straight ahead. Follow signs for Nuclear Medicine. You will go through the double doors and enter the main reception area of the department.

There is parking available for patients and visitors, but spaces can be limited, so it is a good idea to arrive early. There is a charge for parking, and automatic number plate recognition systems are in use. For more details about directions, parking charges, and site maps, visit the trust website at (www.uhcw.nhs.uk).

Facilities available in the hospital

- Chilled water dispenser in the department.
- Costa Coffee, M&S and WHSmith in the main reception area.
- Three hospital restaurants.

What if you still have questions?

If you have any questions or concerns, we're here to help. Call the person who referred you for this treatment or call Nuclear Medicine.

Monday to Friday: 9am to 5pm.

Call: 02476 968212

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format, please contact 02476 96 8212 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke-free policy.

Patient Information

Did we get it right?

We would like you to tell us what you think about our services. This will help us make further improvements and recognise members of staff who provide a good service.



Have your say. Scan the QR code or visit:

www.uhcw.nhs.uk/feedback

Document History

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