



GUIDE



GFR (Glomerular Filtration Rate) Study



The Ottawa Hospital | L'Hôpital
d'Ottawa



Disclaimer

This is general information developed by The Ottawa Hospital. It is not intended to replace the advice of a qualified healthcare provider. Please consult your healthcare provider who will be able to determine the appropriateness of the information for your specific situation.

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Your doctor has requested a GFR (Glomerular Filtration Rate) of your kidney(s). This leaflet will answer some of the questions you may have.

What is a GFR study?

A GFR study is used to determine how well your kidney(s) are filtering blood and creating urine. This procedure involves multiple blood samples taken over a period of 4 or more hours.

Do I need to prepare for the scan?

The results of this study will be improved if you drink at least 1 liter of water starting 1 or 2 hours before your appointment. Food will not interfere with this study. If you are taking medications, you may continue as usual.

What is involved?

When you arrive in the Nuclear Medicine department, a technologist will explain the entire procedure to you and ask you if you have any questions. You will then be given an injection of a radioactive tracer into a vein in your arm. If your physician is also interested in taking pictures of the function of your kidney(s), this injection will be given while you are on an imaging table with a special camera under the table. Following the injection, you will then be free to leave the department, returning at three separate one hour intervals throughout the day. When you return for each of these short visits, the technologist will take a sample of your blood for analysis. Once all of the blood samples have been completed, you will be free to go home, with no ill effects from the procedure. If you are an in-patient, a porter will return you to your room.

Will it hurt?

Only the 'pinprick' of the injection needle may hurt a bit. You may have had a blood test in the past. This is much the same.

Is the radiation dangerous?

The amount of radioactivity used for this test is quite small and will disappear by itself soon after the scan is finished. Most of the radioactivity disappears within one day and any remaining traces disappear within one week.

Do I need to do anything after the scan?

No special precautions are needed after the scan. If you are travelling across any borders in the seven days after your scan, please ask us for further advice. Ports and airports have very sensitive radiation detectors which may pick up tiny amounts of radioactivity remaining after your scan. We will give you a letter that you can show to customs officials at ports or airports.

What happens to the results of the scan?

Once your procedure has been completed, a specially trained technologist will analyse your blood samples, to determine how well your kidneys are filtering blood and creating urine. A Nuclear Medicine specialist will then review this analysis and create a report. This report is then sent to the doctor who asked us to do the study.

Is there anything I should tell the staff before the scan?

Yes, if you are pregnant or think you may be pregnant, please telephone us to let us know. Also, please telephone us if you are breast-feeding.

