



GUIDE



Gastric Emptying 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 health-care provider. Please consult your health-care provider who will be able to determine the appropriateness of the information for your specific situation.

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Gastric Emptying Study

Your doctor has requested a gastric emptying study. This booklet will answer some of the questions you may have.

What is a gastric emptying study?

A Gastric Emptying Study is a test to determine the time it takes a meal to move through a person's stomach. Since this test follows the digestive process, it takes four hours to complete all imaging. It is typically ordered by physicians for patients with frequent vomiting, gastroparesis (slow digestion), abdominal pain, early satiety (getting full quickly) and pre-operative evaluation.

Do I need to prepare for the scan?

This test requires that you be fasting from midnight before your test. You must also refrain from smoking during this same period. If you think you may be pregnant or if you are breast feeding, please inform the technologist before you receive your imaging meal.

If you are allergic to eggs, please advise our booking staff as soon as possible before coming for this procedure.

If you are diabetic, please bring your glucometer and insulin to your appointment.

Certain medications may interfere with the results of this test.

Please check with your physician before stopping the following medications TWO DAYS before your test:

- Bentytol, Codeine or codeine derivatives, Demerol, Domperidone (Motilium), Erythromycin, Levsin, Metoclopramide (Raglan)

- Morphine or morphine derivatives, Oxycontin, Percocet and Percodan

Please bring a complete list of all medications you are taking to your appointment.

What is involved?

If you are an outpatient you will be asked to go to the Nuclear Medicine department, located at either the General or Civic Campus. The booking clerk will inform you of the exact location for your procedure and also provide you with directions to the department.

In the Nuclear Medicine Division a technologist will ask you to eat a small breakfast, consisting of eggs, toast and jam, to which a small amount of radioactive material has been added. The amount of radioactivity is very small. You will not be able to taste it and it will have no adverse effect on you.

Immediately after this you will be asked to stand in front of a special detector, called a gamma camera, to take pictures of your stomach, from the front and the back. These pictures will be repeated once an hour for four hours. The camera does not produce radiation; it simply picks up signals (gamma rays) from the radioactive substance which was in the eggs. After each set of images, you are free to leave the department until your next set of images. You must remain fasting and not smoke during this time.

After the test, you will feel no ill effects from the examination. The results will be sent directly to your physician.

The technologist will be able to determine how your stomach empties its contents based on the all of the images taken over the four hours.

Will it hurt?

This test is completely painless, but will take four to five hours to complete.

Is the radiation dangerous?

The amount of radioactivity used for this test is quite small and will disappear by itself within 48 hours.

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?

A specially trained doctor will examine the pictures. This is normally done soon after the end of the scan. A report is then sent to the doctor who asked us to do the scan. Your doctor will normally receive the report within one week.

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 breastfeeding.

