



GUIDE



Hepatobiliary imaging (HIDA)



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 own personal physician who will be able to determine if this information is appropriate for your specific situation.

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Your doctor has requested a hepatobiliary scan. This booklet will answer some of the questions you may have.

What is a hepatobiliary scan?

This is a simple and painless way of taking pictures of your gall bladder function. This procedure can take up to two and a half to three hours on the day of your appointment, but in many cases is finished after one hour. Many patients will require an injection of a synthetic version of the hormone released when you eat. This causes the gall bladder to contract, and you may feel some discomfort after the injection, especially if you have pain after eating. A small percentage of patients will require an injection of morphine to stimulate function within the liver and gallbladder. The amount of morphine used is small but may affect your ability to drive for a few hours following the procedure. For this reason, it is required that someone accompanies you to your appointment or picks you up after your appointment.

Do I need to prepare for the scan?

You must be fasting for at least four hours before the exam.

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.

You will be asked to lie down on a table and a special detector, called a gamma camera, will be placed over your abdomen. Then a technologist will inject a radioactive substance into a

vein in your arm. The amount of radioactivity injected is very small and will have no adverse effects on you. You will receive no more radiation than for an ordinary x-ray. The camera will take pictures of your gall bladder for one hour.

The camera does not produce radiation; it simply picks up signals (gamma rays) from the radioactive substance which was injected. Therefore, even though many pictures may be taken, you will not be exposed to any further radiation.

In order to obtain the maximum information from the exam, it may be necessary to take further pictures. A Nuclear Medicine specialist will determine if additional imaging is required and if any additional medications must be administered to fully understand the function of your liver and gallbladder. Rarely, these additional images may take several hours to complete and some patients may be asked to return the next day for a final image.

Once your procedure is finished, you may then return home or, if you are hospitalized, returns to your room, feeling no ill effects from the examination. The results will be sent directly to your physician.

Will it hurt?

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. If you have experienced pain in your abdomen recently, it is possible that this test may cause this to recur. This pain will only last a few minutes and will provide our physician valuable information about your condition.

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.) The amount of radiation is similar to that from an x-ray examination.

Do I need to do anything after the scan?

The technologist performing your test will advise you if you are able to drive immediately following this test. 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 a few hours.

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.

