



GUIDE



Parathyroid scan



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.

P929 (05/2011)

Printed at The Ottawa Hospital

A parathyroid scan is used to examine how your parathyroid glands are working. It can show conditions that are not seen using other tests or scans. It can also identify parathyroid tissue away from its normal location in the neck.

Before the scan

If you are on a thyroid hormone replacement, your doctor should ask you to stop taking it before the scan. It is normal to stop thyroxine three to four weeks before the scan and Liothyronine (e.g. Tertroxin or Triiodothyronine) about one to two weeks before the scan. If you suspect that you are taking any other thyroid medications, please contact our booking office at the number listed below. Please check with your doctor before stopping any of these medications.

What is involved?

This test will take most of the day to complete. When you arrive in the department, a technologist will explain the entire procedure to you. You will then be given a small amount of radioactivity in a drink. You then need to wait for about four hours. This is to allow time for the tracer to travel to your neck area.

During this waiting period, you will be permitted to leave the department and asked to return at the time provided to you by the technologist. The technologist will then give you an injection of a different radioactive tracer. You will be asked to wait another 20 minutes before pictures are taken of your neck. You will then be asked to lie down on a bed and several pictures will be taken of your neck using a special camera called a gamma camera. These pictures will take approximately 15 minutes. You should keep your neck as still as possible while the pictures are taken

but please breathe normally. You will then be permitted to leave the department again and return approximately one to two hours later. The last set of pictures will take approximately 45 minutes. You will be positioned in the same fashion. The radioactivity will disappear by itself soon after the scan is finished. No undressing is required but you will be asked to remove any necklaces before the scan.

Will it hurt?

Only the pinprick of the injection needle may hurt a bit. You may have had a blood test in the past.

Is the radiation dangerous?

The radioactivity will disappear by itself soon after the scan is finished (nearly all of it disappears within one day, 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?

No. You can eat normally and go where you wish. If you wish, you could drink a bit more than normal for the rest of the day. This will help wash the radioactivity out of your body more quickly. If you are travelling abroad 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 doctor will examine the pictures. This is normally done at the end of the day or early the next day. A report is then sent to the doctor who asked us to do the scan.

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. If you are concerned that a medication you are taking may affect the results, then please check with the technologist performing your test before you start. Also, please telephone us if you are breastfeeding.

What if I have more questions?

We want your visit to be as pleasant as possible. If you have any questions, please ask the staff in the Nuclear Medicine department. You can telephone before your test day, or ask before the scan starts. **Our telephone number is 613-761-4831, option 8.**

Notes
