



GUIDE



Renal 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 health-care provider who will be able to determine if this information is appropriate for your specific situation.

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

What is a renal scan?

Your physician has requested an examination called a “renal scan”. This is a simple and painless way of taking pictures of the blood flow and function of your kidneys using a radioactive tracer.

Do I need to prepare for the scan?

Please try to drink approximately 1 liter of water starting 2 hours before your appointment. You are not required to fast for this test.

What is involved?

When you arrive to the Nuclear Medicine department a technologist will explain the procedure to you in full detail. You will then be asked to lie down on a table and a special detector, called a gamma camera, will be positioned under the table directly below your kidneys. A technologist will then inject a radioactive tracer into a vein in your arm and the camera will take a series of pictures for 30 minutes.

After a 30 minute wait we will take several more pictures of your kidneys. This takes about 10 minutes. Further pictures may be taken if the nuclear medicine physician feels it is necessary. The camera does not produce radiation; it simply picks up signals (gamma rays) from the radioactive tracer which was injected. Therefore, even though several pictures are taken, you will not be exposed to any further radiation.

You may then return home or, if you are hospitalized, return to your room feeling no ill effects from the examination. The results of your scan will be sent directly to your physician.

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

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 doctor will examine the pictures. This is normally done soon after the end of the scan. A report is then sent to your doctor 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.

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.**

