



GUIDE



DMSA 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 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 renal DMSA scan. This booklet will answer some of the questions you may have.

What is a DMSA renal scan?

A DMSA scan is a renal scan used to assess Pyelonephritis, renal scarring extent and location, as well as differential renal function in the left and right kidneys.

Do I need to prepare for the scan?

No special preparation is required. Food and drink will not interfere with this test.

What is involved?

When you arrive in the nuclear medicine department, a technologist will explain the exam and inject a small amount of a radioactive tracer into a vein in your arm. There are no side effects to this injection. After the injection you are free to leave the department and will be given a time to return for imaging, generally three to four hours after the injection. The delay allows the kidneys to absorb the tracer. When you return the technologist will have you empty your bladder and then ask you to lie on an imaging table. A special camera, called a gamma camera will take two sets of images of your kidneys. The first set of images, the camera will rotate around your body for approximately 15 minutes. The next set of images is taken with the camera still and will only take a few minutes to complete.

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 phone us to let us know. Also, please telephone us if you are breastfeeding.

Any 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, or ask before the scan starts. Our telephone number is **613-761-4831, option 8**.

Notes
