



GUIDE



Whole body iodine imaging



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

What is this study going to show?

This study is designed to see if there is any residual thyroid tissue in your neck area or in any other areas of your body. This will help your physician to better understand the stage of your condition.

What does the study involve?

In the Nuclear Medicine Division; a technologist will give you a drink containing a small amount of radioactive iodine. You will not be able to taste the iodine and the amount of radiation is very small. You will experience no reaction. You will be given an appointment to return in 48 hours, as it takes time for the iodine to adequately accumulate in the areas to be imaged.

When you return in 48 hours, you will be asked to lie down on a table and a special detector, called a gamma camera, will be placed over your head and will scan your body from head to feet. Sometimes a certain part of your body may be studied in detail with individual pictures. The procedure takes about 60 minutes. The camera does not produce radiation; it simply picks up signals (gamma rays) from the radioactive iodine which you drank.

Will it hurt?

This procedure is completely painless.

What if I am pregnant or breast-feeding?

If you are pregnant, or you think you might be pregnant, you need to inform your doctor or the Nuclear Medicine staff before attending your appointment. In general, exposure to radiation during pregnancy should be kept to a minimum and it may be necessary to postpone your scan. Breast feeding should be stopped and not resumed.

Can I bring somebody with me?

Someone may accompany you both for your drink and imaging day. This will pose no danger to your guest.

Do I need any preparation?

There are certain kinds of medication and x-ray contrast materials which may interfere with the exam. Therefore, please call us if you are taking medication for your thyroid gland or if you have recently had an x-ray for which a dye was given (e.g. x-ray of the gall bladder).

Is the radioactivity harmful?

The amount of radioactivity you receive in this study is very small and closely monitored. At this level, the benefit to you from a diagnosis of your condition outweighs the risk (negligible) of any harm associated with the radiation you will receive.

Do I need to do anything after the study?

The radioactive iodine used for your whole body dose will remain in your body only temporarily. Most of the iodine not taken up by thyroid tissue will be eliminated during the first few days after your scan. The iodine leaves your body mainly in your urine, but small amounts may leave in your saliva, sweat and feces. Exposure to radiation from the iodine in your body may occur if other people remain very close to you for long periods of time or if the iodine is deposited where other people may have contact with it (e.g. bathroom sink).

Although there is no evidence that the radiation from this amount of iodine will cause harmful effects, it makes sense to minimize the exposure, no matter how small. We therefore recommend that you take the following simple precautions for 4 days following your dose.

1. Drink plenty of liquids. This will help the radioactive iodine leave your body more rapidly.
2. Avoid kissing and sexual intercourse and, if possible, sleep alone.
3. Maintain a distance of approximately 2 meters from children and pregnant women.
4. Wash your hands with plenty of soap and water after you go to the toilet.
5. Flush the toilet 3 times after each use.
6. Use separate towels and washcloths.
7. Do not go to work unless you can satisfy the above conditions both at work and while traveling to work.

In addition, if you are a woman of childbearing age:

1. Avoid pregnancy for 3 months following your scan.
2. Avoid breast feeding for 12 months.

What happens to the study result?

The Nuclear Medicine specialist will report on the study and the result will be sent to the doctor who requested the study.

If you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to ask the technologist who is attending to you.

Notes