

# Nuclear Medicine Thyroid Scan

## Patient Information Sheet

A Thyroid scan is a diagnostic procedure, which looks at how well the thyroid gland is working. It involves an injection of a small amount of radioactive tracer and imaging with a gamma camera.

### Preparation for your appointment

Stop taking Thyroid drugs (**Thyroxine, Carbimazole**) **7 days** before your scan.

Stop taking **Propylthiouracil 14 days** before your scan.

You may eat and take any other medication as normal.

**In the 24 hour period before your appointment** drink at least 1 litre of fluids (preferably water). This will make giving the injection easier. You can use the toilet as often as you need to.

You will need to remove any metal from around your head and neck before your scan. Please avoid any clothing with metal in these areas. **Any jewellery in the head and neck area must be removed before the scan.**

*If possible, please come to your appointment alone as we can only accommodate a small number of people in our waiting room.*

### Are there any risks from the radioactive tracer?

#### Planar pictures

The radioactive tracer is used as sparingly as possible and the benefits of this scan far outweigh the small risk from radiation. The radiation dose you will receive is similar to the radiation received from natural sources in **6 months**. Drinking plenty of fluids and emptying your bladder regularly will help to remove the radiation.

#### SPECT-CT pictures

If it is recommended that additional images are needed. The radiation dose you will receive will be similar to the radiation received from natural sources in **3 years**.

There are no restrictions for spending time with adults after your scan; however, children and pregnant women have a higher risk from radiation, so you should avoid close contact with them for **8 hours** after your injection.

### Pregnancy and Breastfeeding

**Let us know in advance if you may be pregnant or breastfeeding.** This is important because of the small risk of childhood cancer from the radiation that we use.

If you have male healthcare records and were registered female at birth, please talk to the technologist at your appointment so that they can rule out the possibility of pregnancy. This information will not be recorded or shared without your consent.

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## How is the scan performed?

- A small plastic tube (cannula) will be placed in a vein in your arm
- A small amount of radioactive tracer will be injected into a vein in your arm. This will not make you feel any different and will not affect your ability to drive home.
- The scan will be performed **20 minutes after injection**, this delay is necessary to allow the injection to be absorbed into your thyroid.

### Planar pictures – for everyone

- The scan will be performed with you lying on your back for up to **30 minutes**. The gamma camera will be above you very close to your face. Please contact the department if this will be a problem for you.

### SPECT-CT pictures – only if requested by your doctor

- The gamma cameras will move around you in a circle and then there will be a CT scan using x-rays. This will take up to **30 minutes**.

## After your scan

**For 24 hours after your appointment** all patients should sit on the toilet when passing urine. This is to make sure that all the urine gets properly flushed down the toilet as it will be slightly radioactive.

### Results

Results will be sent to the doctor or specialist who referred you for the scan in 2/3 weeks.

### Travelling after your scan

Some major event/ transport venues have very sensitive radiation detectors. These detectors could be triggered by the small amount of radioactivity remaining in your body on the days following your scan. If you're planning to travel within seven days following your scan, we recommend that you carry your appointment letter with you.

## Information for other hospitals or care homes

*Within the 4 days following your scan:*

If you are admitted to a care home or hospital (other than the RUH), or if you are cared for by a healthcare worker in your home, please ask them to contact the RUH Clinical Imaging and Measurement Department. Their employer might need to register with the Health and Safety Executive to show that their staff are aware of the small amount of radioactivity that is present for a few days after your scan.

If you have any concerns or questions about your scan, or you need this information in another format such as larger print, please telephone: **01225 82 6630**.

Clinical Imaging and Measurement Department  
Zone B, Department B58  
Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust  
Combe Park, Bath, BA1 3NG  
01225 82 6630 | [www.ruh.nhs.uk](http://www.ruh.nhs.uk)

Please contact the Patient Support and Complaints Team (PSCT/ known previously as PALS) if you would like to feedback your experience of the hospital. Email: [ruh-tr.psct@nhs.net](mailto:ruh-tr.psct@nhs.net) or telephone: **01225 82 5656**.

Date of publication: Feb.,2026 / Ref: RUH NM/0721v7