

# Nuclear Medicine

## Gastric Emptying Scan

### Patient Information Sheet

A gastric emptying scan is a diagnostic procedure which looks at whether your stomach is emptying normally. It involves having a drink containing a small amount of radioactive tracer. This is followed by imaging with a gamma camera.

#### Preparation for your appointment

Please read the specific instructions in your appointment letter.

If you have any **food allergies or intolerances** or any special dietary requirements, please call to let us know before your appointment. The milkshake style drink is vegetarian friendly and contains soy.

If you are **diabetic**, please bring your blood monitoring equipment. If you take insulin for your diabetes, **please bring your morning dose with you** to be taken when you have your drink.

There are a number of medications which may interfere with your test. Therefore it is essential to **call the department no later than two weeks before your appointment** to assess whether you will need to temporarily stop taking any medications.

**Please do not smoke, eat or drink for six hours prior to the test. You will also not be able to smoke, eat or drink during the test (two hours).**

*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?

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 a month. Drinking plenty of fluids and emptying your bladder regularly will help to remove the radiation faster.

There are no restrictions for spending time with others after your scan as the radiation dose is very low and will not affect others.

#### Pregnancy and Breastfeeding

Due to the radiation involved, there is a risk to an unborn or breastfeeding child. Therefore, it is important that you let us know in advance if you are or may be pregnant or breastfeeding.

**If you are female and between the ages of 12 and 55, you will be asked to complete a form confirming that you are not pregnant or breastfeeding.**

If you were registered as female at birth and you are transgender with male healthcare records, please talk to the technologist at your appointment. You should let them know if there is any possibility that you could be pregnant, and also let them know if you are chestfeeding. This information will not be recorded or shared without your consent.

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## How is the scan performed?

A technician will prepare four cups of a milkshake-style drink called Fortisip combined with a small amount of radioactive tracer. The tracer will not make you feel any different. Following drinking the four cups, you will be asked to stand between two gamma cameras. If you are unable to stand you may lie down. Pictures of your stomach will be collected at intervals until 13 images have been collected over two hours. Each image will only take one minute. Please wear comfortable, loose clothing so that markers can be placed on your skin during your scan. If you are wearing a bra you will not have to remove it.

## 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 **four 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 the Clinical Imaging and Measurement Department. Clinical Imaging and Measurement (C16): **01225 824080**

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Combe Park, Bath, BA1 3NG  
01225 428331 | [www.ruh.nhs.uk](http://www.ruh.nhs.uk)

Please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) if you would like to feedback your experience of the hospital. Email [ruh-tr.pals@nhs.net](mailto:ruh-tr.pals@nhs.net) or telephone **01225 825656**

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