

Can the patient take any steps to protect against radiation?

If you have had a nuclear medicine scan in the recent past inform the staff member to ensure that tests are not duplicated unnecessarily.

The following precautions need to be observed for 24 hours after your bone scan:

Patients should drink plenty of fluids and empty their bladders frequently. This helps to clear the injected material from the body. Patients should observe careful hygiene when going to the toilet during this period. It is advisable to flush the toilet twice after use.

It is recommended that patients avoid spending long periods of time (in excess of 30 mins) in close contact with young children or pregnant women.

If you are a nursing mother express and discard the breast milk for **24 hours** after your injection. You may resume normal breast-feeding after this time.

Important information

Young children and pregnant women should not accompany patients to Nuclear medicine.

If there is any chance you may be **pregnant**, please inform the nuclear medicine department prior to your appointment. (01-7974440).

Directions (Beaumont Hospital)

The Nuclear Medicine department is located in the radiology department, on the lower ground floor of the hospital. Please check in at the main x-ray reception desk on arrival.

Who do I contact if I am unable to attend?

Please contact 01-7974440 if you wish to reschedule your appointment

Nuclear Medicine
Radiology Department
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Beaumont Hospital
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Directorate

Breast Sentinel Node Scan

Patient Information

Welcome to the
Nuclear Medicine
Department

Introduction

A Nuclear Medicine sentinel node scan has been requested for you and this leaflet explains what the scan involves and what you need to do to prepare for your scan.

What is radiation?

Radiation is a form of electrical and magnetic disturbance that transports energy. For example it is radiation that brings energy to us from the sun.

What is a Nuclear Medicine Sentinel Node scan?

In the nuclear medicine dept you will be injected with a small amount of a radioactive 'tracer' or isotope into the breast tissue. This material is carried into the armpit by the lymph vessels and trapped in the sentinel node, which can be seen on the nuclear medicine scan. This scan only shows where the sentinel node is located not whether it contains tumor or not.

What is a gamma camera?

A gamma camera detects radiation coming from your body and forms a picture using sophisticated computer programmes. The camera consists of a flat detector which passes over the body.

Do I need to prepare for the scan?

There is no special preparation for this scan. You may eat and drink normally beforehand.

How will the injection affect me?

You should not feel any different after your injection. The procedure will not affect your ability to drive and you do not need someone to accompany you unless you so wish.

What will happen during the scan?

Your scan will be done approximately 30 minutes after the injection. You will need to undress for your scan and you will be asked to remove metal objects such as keys, coins, belt from your person prior to the scan. Your scan will be done lying down on the gamma camera. The scan will take approximately 15-30 minutes to complete. On occasion it may be necessary to perform a second scan after a period of time has passed. Your radiographer will let you know if this is required or not.



Will I receive much radiation?

No. The amount of radiation you receive is very small and the risks are low. The radiation dose you receive from this scan is similar to that which you would receive from your environment over a period of 1 to 2 years. Your doctor will have weighed the benefit of improved diagnosis of your condition against the small risk of the radiation exposure.

How does a nuclear medicine scan differ from an X-ray?

Nuclear Medicine patients are administered substances that emit radiation and which enable staff to investigate processes that are happening in the patient's body. The amount of radiation is similar to that used in X-ray. In Nuclear Medicine the patient is emitting radiation for a period after the substance is administered. For sentinel node scans the radiation can remain in the body for up to 24 hours. Your radiographer will advise you on the precautions you will need to apply after your sentinel node scan. These precautions should be followed for 24 hours after your scan.

