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NUCLEAR MEDICINE

The aim of this brochure is to explain what nuclear medicine is and what to expect if you are booked to undergo a nuclear medicine procedure

### What is Nuclear Medicine?

Nuclear medicine is a branch of medical imaging that uses tiny amounts of radioactive materials called tracers. These are introduced into the body to investigate the function of particular organs and images of the organ being investigated are taken with a special scanning device called a Gamma Camera.

Sometimes radioactive materials are also used to treat particular conditions.

### How is a Nuclear Medicine Study performed?

A nuclear medicine study usually involves having the radioactive tracer introduced into your body by a small injection into a vein. It then will be extracted from the blood stream by the organ under investigation. Following this injection, pictures may be taken immediately and/or several hours later, depending on which procedure your doctor has ordered. Some of the more complex procedures may go over several days.

### What preparation is required?

For many nuclear medicine procedures, little or no preparation is required. However, some of the more complex procedures need preparation that may include ceasing particular medications prior to the procedure. Nuclear medicine staff will advise you of the particular requirements for the procedure you are undergoing.

Breastfeeding mothers may need to cease breastfeeding for a period of time following the procedure. Nuclear Medicine staff will advise if this is necessary and also the length of time for which breastfeeding will need to be suspended.

Because you will have a small amount of radioactive material in your body, you will be advised to avoid close contact with young children (under the age of twelve) and pregnant women.

### How long will the procedure take?

The length of time a nuclear medicine procedure will take is variable. Some procedures may require you to attend more than once as part of the same test, with a gap of several hours between the attendances. Others may be completed in the one attendance. The nuclear medicine staff will advise you at the time of booking.

### If you are pregnant

Please inform nuclear medicine staff before your procedure if you are pregnant or believe that there is a possibility that you might be. In most cases this will mean your procedure will be postponed. However, in some cases where the procedure is absolutely necessary, it may be performed, but the radiation dose administered will be kept to a minimum.

### Are there any side effects?

There are no side effects from the injection of the radioactive tracer. In most cases you will be able to eat and drink normally before and after a procedure, although for some procedures you may need to fast. The nuclear medicine staff will inform you if this is necessary. The procedure will not affect your ability to drive a car.

### Can you return to work after your procedure?

For many procedures you may return to work, unless you work with pregnant women or children. However, for some procedures where you will be required to attend on more than one occasion over the day, it is advisable arrange to take the day off.

### If you have any further questions

If you have any further questions or are concerned about any aspect of the procedure you have been booked in for, contact the nuclear medicine department on **52267557**.

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