



FACT SHEET

Nuclear Medicine Renal Scan

This fact sheet tells you what a Nuclear Medicine Renal scan is, and what is involved. Please read this sheet before having your scan. If you have any questions, ask your doctor or call the department.

What is a Nuclear Medicine Renal Scan?

This is a Nuclear medicine procedure, used to see how well your kidneys are working. This is done by injecting a small amount of a radiopharmaceutical (radioactive tracer) into a vein in your arm. A special camera (called a gamma camera) is used to track the radiotracer and take pictures of your kidneys.

There are different types of renal scans performed and is dependent on your clinical indication and what your doctor has requested.

A diethylenetriaminepentaacetate (DTPA) renal scan or a mercaptoacetyltriglycine (MMAG3) renal scan is performed to look at the flow of the tracer through the kidneys into the bladder. It helps to identify any blockages between your kidney and bladder.

A dimercapto succinic acid (DMSA) renal scan is used to look at the size and structure of your kidneys and can help to see if there is an infection in your kidneys.

What is involved?

There is no special preparation for this scan.

When you arrive for your scan, you will be seen by a nuclear medicine doctor and the details of the test will be explained to you.

Sometimes, your doctor may request that your test be combined with a blood test to check your glomerular filtration rate (GFR) which also helps show if your kidneys are working properly. The nuclear medicine doctor will explain the test to you in detail and the time it

may take.

Our doctors may also give you a medication called furosemide (a diuretic). This will be discussed with you if required.

The test can take between 1 – 4 hours. You do not need to stay in the department for the whole duration.

What happens after the scan?

After your scan, a nuclear medicine physician will assess the pictures and then send the results to your referring doctor. You should not have any problems after the test and can resume normal activities including driving. You will be asked to avoid close contact with children and pregnant women for a few hours after the test.

Are there any risks or side effects?

All nuclear medicine tests involve exposure to radiation. The amount of radiation is very small, and the risks of side effects are very low. Allergic reactions are very rare and almost always mild.

When will my doctor receive the results?

The report will be faxed to your referring doctors within 48 hours of your appointment and a hard copy of the images and the report will be posted out if requested by the referrer.

For more information

If you have any questions or concerns regarding Nuclear Medicine or your test, please call the department on : (02) 8382 1830 or alternatively you can email on: svhs.nm@svha.org.au