

Procedures/Diagnostic Tests

Gallium scan

You are scheduled for a gallium scan. This is a safe, effective, and painless scan. It uses a compound that gives off a small amount of radiation (radioisotope). You will receive this compound by injection. The compound is used only for diagnostic purposes and helps your doctor locate specific sites of tumor, abscess, inflammation, or other abnormalities within your body. The scan takes place in the Nuclear Medicine Department.

Preparation

- *Before* you receive the injection, there is no preparation. You may eat and drink whatever you like.

Procedure

- After you receive the injection and before the pictures are taken, be sure to have a good bowel movement. If you need a laxative to do this, please ask for one.
- A small amount of the radioisotope will be injected into a vein. You will feel a pinprick as the injection is given.
- Depending on the purpose of the scan, it may be done 24 or 48 hours after the injection. Sometimes the scan is repeated daily, over 3 to 4 days, but no additional injection will be given. If your test takes place over several days, please return to the diagnostic imaging section at the time scheduled for you by the appointment clerk.
- During the scan, you will lie on your back on a firm table with your head flat. A very sensitive machine (scanner) that receives and records radiation, will move over your body from your head to your toes. Many pictures will be taken as the scanner moves.
- Stay very still while these pictures are being taken.
- The scan lasts 1 to 2 hours.

After the procedure

- There are no side effects, but a small amount of radioisotope may still be present in your body for up to 4 weeks.

-
- You may urinate in the toilet as usual. Your urine and blood will be labeled “Radioactive” if sent to the laboratory during the first 4 weeks after the injection. Your body rids itself of the compound as it does the food you eat.

If you have questions about the procedure, please ask. Your nurse and doctor are ready to assist you at all times.

Special instructions

- Because it uses radioactivity, this scan is not performed in pregnant women. *If you are pregnant or think you might be pregnant, please inform your doctor immediately so that a decision can be made about this scan.*
- *Also, please inform your doctor immediately if you are breast-feeding.* Some scans can be performed in breast-feeding women if they are willing to stop breast-feeding for a while.

This information is prepared specifically for persons taking part in clinical research at the National Institutes of Health Clinical Center and may not apply to patients elsewhere. If you have questions about the information presented here, talk to a member of your health care team.

Products/resources named serve as examples and do not imply endorsement by NIH. The fact that a certain product/resource is not named does not imply that such product/resource is unsatisfactory.

National Institutes of Health Clinical Center
Bethesda, MD 20892

Questions about the Clinical Center?
<http://www.cc.nih.gov/comments.shtml>

3/00

