



Gastric Intestinal Bleed Scan

How to prepare for your scan

A gastric intestinal bleed scan (GI scan) is a nuclear medicine exam using special radioactive material that allows doctors to locate the site of the GI bleed.

This handout explains how to prepare for the scan, how the scan works, how the scan is performed, what you may feel during the scan, and how to get your results.

What is a GI Bleed scan?

A gastric intestinal bleed scan (GI bleed scan) is a nuclear medicine exam using a radioactive tracer of your blood that allows doctors to locate where the bleeding is from in the stomach or intestine. It is a form of radiology, because radiation is used to capture pictures of the human body.

How does the scan work?

A small sample of your blood will be made radioactive. It will then be injected back into you. Your radioactive blood will give off gamma rays. The gamma camera detects the rays and then produces pictures and locates the site of the bleed.

How should I prepare for the scan?

- No preparation is needed.
- Tell the technologist if you have a heparin allergy.
- Please tell the doctor or technologist if there is a chance you may be pregnant.

How is the scan performed?

1. The technologist will draw blood through an intravenous (IV) line and then make your red blood cells radioactive. The technologist will inject your blood with tracer in your IV line.
2. The gamma camera detects the tracer. A computer will then produce pictures of the abdomen based on the detected gamma rays.
3. The imaging involves lying flat on your back while the camera takes pictures over your abdomen.

Questions?

Call 206-598-6200

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns. UWMC Clinic staff are also available to help at any time.

Imaging Services:
206-598-6200

4. The technologist will help make you comfortable. The imaging will take a minimum of 1 hour, and possibly 2 hours. You must not move during the time the camera is taking pictures. If you move, the pictures will be blurry and may have to be repeated.

What will I feel during the scan?

- Lying still on the exam table may be hard for some patients.
- Some minor discomfort during a nuclear medicine procedure may arise from the IVs.
- Most of the radioactivity passes out of your body in urine or stool. The rest simply goes away over time.

Who interprets the results and how do I get them?

When the test is over, the nuclear medicine doctor will review your images, prepare a written report, and discuss the results with your doctor. Your doctor will then talk with you about the results and discuss your treatment options.

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