



Hepatobiliary Scan

How to prepare for your scan

A hepatobiliary scan is a diagnostic nuclear medicine procedure used to evaluate abnormalities involving the liver and gallbladder.

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 hepatobiliary scan?

A hepatobiliary iminodiacetic acid scan (HIDA Scan) is a nuclear medicine study used to check for abnormalities involving the liver and gallbladder. It is a form of radiology, because radiation is used to capture pictures of the human body.

How does the scan work?

You will be given a small dose of radioactive material through an intravenous (IV) line. This compound, called a tracer, collects in the liver and gallbladder and gives off gamma rays. The gamma camera detects the rays and then produces pictures and measurements of the liver and gallbladder.

How should I prepare for the scan?

- The day before your exam, be sure to eat and drink. Do not skip meals.
- Do not eat or drink anything 4 hours before the exam.
- A patient who is unable to remain still for an extended period of time may require sedation for a bone scan.
- Women who are pregnant or breastfeeding should not have this test.

How is the scan performed?

1. You will be given a small dose of radioactive material, intravenously (IV).
2. The gamma camera detects the gamma rays given off by the tracer. A computer will then produce pictures of the liver and gallbladder based on the detected gamma rays.

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

3. The technologist will take pictures right after the injection, for a minimum of 1 hour. Sometimes delayed pictures are taken 3 to 4 hours later.
4. The imaging involves lying flat while the camera takes pictures over your abdomen. The technologist will help make you comfortable. 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.
5. If evaluation of your gallbladder function has been requested, a medicine may be given that causes your gallbladder to contract. Images will be taken during the infusion of this medicine.

What will I feel during the scan?

- Some minor discomfort during a nuclear medicine procedure may arise from the IV.
- Lying still on the exam table may be hard for some patients.
- 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. Talk to your doctor to find out whether or not you will need to restart any medications that you stopped for this exam.

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