



Kidney Nuclear Medicine Exam

How to prepare for your procedure

A kidney nuclear medicine exam is used to study the structure and function of the kidneys. Read this handout to learn how to prepare for the exam, how the exam works, how the exam is performed, what you may feel during the exam, and how to get your results.

What is a kidney nuclear medicine exam?

A nuclear medicine exam uses radioactive compounds to detect and treat many diseases. It is a form of radiology because radiation is used to capture pictures of the human body.

Kidney nuclear medicine refers to tests that are used to check the structure and function of the kidneys.

How does the exam work?

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

How should I prepare for the exam?

- Drink at least 24 to 36 oz. of water, 1 to 2 hours before the exam. You must be well hydrated for the exam.

How is the exam performed?

1. A tracer is injected through an IV. The pictures will begin right away after the injection. About 15 minutes after the injection, you may receive a dose of Lasix. Lasix is a diuretic (water pill), and the side effects include frequent urination. Constipation can occur as well. Continue to drink water after the exam is over to avoid difficulty in moving your bowels.
2. While the pictures are being taken, you must remain as still as you can. The exam takes about 45 minutes.
3. After the exam, a doctor with special training in nuclear medicine checks the quality of the pictures.

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

What will I feel during the exam?

- You may feel some minor discomfort 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 pictures, prepare a written report and discuss the results with your doctor. Your doctor will then discuss the results and treatment options with you.

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