



Parathyroid Scan

How to prepare for your scan

A parathyroid scan is a diagnostic nuclear medicine procedure used to evaluate abnormalities involving parathyroid, which are located on the back side of the thyroid gland.

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 parathyroid scan?

A parathyroid scan is a nuclear medicine exam that uses a radioactive compound to diagnose and localize parathyroid adenoma. 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 parathyroid tissue and gives off gamma rays. The gamma camera detects the rays and then produces pictures of parathyroid tissue.

How should I prepare for the scan?

- No preparation is needed.
- A patient who is unable to remain still for an extended period of time may require sedation.
- 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 a radioactive material intravenously (IV). This compound, called a tracer, collects in the parathyroid and will give off gamma rays.
2. The gamma camera detects the rays. A computer will then produce pictures of the parathyroid based on the detected gamma rays.
3. The technologist will take pictures right after the injection, 1 hour and 2 hours later.

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 imaging involves lying flat while the camera takes pictures of your parathyroid. 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. The technologist will help make you comfortable. You will be able to get up between imaging times.
5. The total time will take about 3 to 4 hours.

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.

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON
MEDICAL CENTER
UW Medicine

Imaging Services

Box 357115

1959 N.E. Pacific St. Seattle, WA 98195
206-598-6200