

# **Nuclear Medicine Thyroid Scan**

Information for patients, relatives and carers

① For more information, please contact: **Radiology Department**, Nuclear Medicine, York Hospital, Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE. Telephone: 01904 725936 or e-mail: [yhs-tr.ctconfirmations@nhs.net](mailto:yhs-tr.ctconfirmations@nhs.net)

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## **About this leaflet**

In this leaflet we tell you about the procedure known as a Nuclear Medicine Thyroid scan. We explain what is involved and what the possible risks are. The information in this leaflet is not meant to replace an informed discussion between you and your doctor but can act as a starting point for such a discussion.

## **What is a Thyroid scan?**

A thyroid scan is used to understand how your thyroid is working. Your doctor may have referred you for the scan to get more information about any swellings on your neck, or as a follow up to a blood test.

Images are taken using a gamma camera and the results will help your doctor to understand your thyroid function.

## **Are there any alternatives?**

There may be alternative tests available. Your doctor has decided this test is the most appropriate for you. If you have any concerns, please discuss them with the doctor who referred you to us.

## **What preparation is needed before the Thyroid Scan?**

There is no special preparation needed for this scan. You can eat and drink as normal.

You should be prepared to be at the hospital for up to one hour.

You will not need to change your clothes, but it is a good idea not to wear anything with metal on your top half (bras are fine) and remove jewellery over your neck and chest area before attending your appointment.

Please contact us as soon as you receive your appointment if you:

- Currently take levothyroxine medicine (you must stop taking this medicine for the four weeks before your scan).
- Have had a CT scan using contrast in the four weeks before your thyroid scan appointment.

## **What happens during the Thyroid scan?**

When you arrive at the nuclear medicine department, a member of staff will explain the scan to you, and you will have an opportunity to ask questions.

You will receive a small injection into a vein in your arm.

The injection contains a small amount of a radioactive tracer, which is absorbed by your thyroid so it can be seen with the scanner.

You will then be asked to sit in the waiting room for around 10 minutes before being called in for your scan. You will lie on the table and the camera will come down over your head to take the images needed. The scan will take around 10 minutes to complete.

## **What happens after the Thyroid scan?**

After the appointment you can carry on as you normally would. You will not need to keep your distance from other people, and you can eat and drink as normal.

## **Are there any risks or complications?**

Nuclear Medicine procedures are very safe diagnostic imaging tests. Side effects from the injection are extremely rare and mild, for example a rash, itching and nausea or headache. They usually pass after 48 hours.

The amount of radioactivity involved is very small, and after 24 hours the radioactive tracer will have passed out of your body. There is radiation in the air and ground all around us called background radiation. Most nuclear medicine scans give on average the equivalent of a few months to a year's worth of background radiation.

If you believe you are, or might be pregnant, or if you are breastfeeding, please let us know before your appointment. Further guidance has been published by Public Health England, visit website: Exposure to ionising radiation from medical imaging: safety advice - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)).

## **How will I get my results?**

You will not be given the results on the day of your scan. A report will be sent to the doctor who asked us to do the scan. They will then let you know the results.

## **What if I have any other questions?**

If you have any worries or questions about your scan after reading this leaflet, please feel free to telephone us on 01904 725936, or email [yhs-tr.ctconfirmations@nhs.net](mailto:yhs-tr.ctconfirmations@nhs.net) and we will be happy to talk to you.

## **Tell us what you think of this leaflet**

We hope that you found this leaflet helpful. If you would like to tell us what you think, please contact: [yhs-tr.ctconfirmations@nhs.net](mailto:yhs-tr.ctconfirmations@nhs.net).

## **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**

PALS offers impartial advice and assistance to patients, their relatives, friends and carers. We can listen to feedback (positive or negative), answer questions and help resolve any concerns about Trust services. PALS can be contacted on 01904 726262, or email [yhs-tr.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net](mailto:yhs-tr.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net).

An answer phone is available out of hours.

## **Teaching, training and research**

Our Trust is committed to teaching, training and research to support the development of health and healthcare in our community.

Healthcare students may observe consultations for this purpose.

You can opt out if you do not want students to observe. We may also ask you if you would like to be involved in our research.

## **Leaflets in alternative languages or formats**

If you would like this information in a different format, including braille or easy read, or translated into a different language, please speak to a member of staff in the ward or department providing your care.

Patient Information Leaflets can be accessed via the Trust's Patient Information Leaflet website: [www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk/your-visit/patient-information-leaflets/](http://www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk/your-visit/patient-information-leaflets/)

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