



Royal Cornwall Hospitals
NHS Trust

Thyroid scan



One + all | we care

Who is this leaflet for?

Your doctor would like you to have a nuclear medicine thyroid scan and has arranged for you to visit our department. This leaflet aims to answer any questions you may have, but please don't hesitate to contact us if you need any more information.

What is a thyroid scan?

A thyroid scan is a sensitive test that will give your doctor useful information about how well your thyroid gland is working. It is often used to investigate swellings in the neck.

This webpage gives further information, however the procedure may vary.

www.bnms.org.uk/page/ThyroidScan

Are there any alternatives?

You could have an ultrasound scan, however this does not provide as much information about how your thyroid gland is working. You may need an ultrasound as well as your thyroid scan.

How do I prepare for it?

Wear loose and comfortable clothing. You can eat and drink normally.

If you are taking medication to control your thyroid please ring the department when you receive this appointment.

What will happen?

When you arrive in the department, a small injection of a radioactive tracer will be injected into a vein your arm. It is very unlikely that you will have any side effects from this. You will be scanned around 20 minutes after your injection.

With any injection, there is a small risk that some of the tracer may leak around the injection site. The risk associated with this is very small (eg. reddening or darkening of skin) and we will advise on any follow up in the unlikely event that this should affect you.

How is the scan performed?

During the scan, you will be asked to lie on a bed for about 20 minutes, while the radiographer/technologist takes pictures. The camera will be positioned close to you but you should not feel claustrophobic.

Is it suitable for everyone?

If there is a chance that you may be pregnant or are breast-feeding, please contact us before your appointment date. Those patients aged between 12 and 55 years may be asked their pregnancy status. If there is any doubt we will have to rebook your test, unless the test is urgent.

If you have any special requirements regarding mobility problems, or if you suffer from urinary incontinence, please inform us before you attend your appointment so that we can make suitable arrangements to help you.

What happens afterwards?

You can go home or back to work as normal. Eat and drink normally and continue taking your tablets.

If a family member or friend usually helps you (the patient) with any personal care, please be aware that they may receive a very small exposure to radiation in the 24 hours after your scan. This radiation exposure is usually no greater than the natural, background radiation that would be received from spending a couple of weeks in Cornwall. The person who helps you will need to be informed of this exposure and agree to help you around the time of your examination. Please call nuclear medicine on 01872 252230 to discuss this with our staff.

Are there any risks?

We ensure that the amount of radiation you receive is as small as possible. It is similar to the natural radiation you would receive from living in Cornwall for seven weeks. Radio-activity is eliminated from your body very quickly and allergic reactions are very rare.

Can I bring someone with me?

Yes, but please do not bring anyone pregnant or children unless they are the patient.

When will I get my results?

We are unable to give you the results of your scan on the day you attend.

The scan results will be sent to your referring doctor, who will contact you.

Where can I park?

Parking is in the pay and display car parks. There are 'dropping off' points and parking for the disabled near the main entrances. Please allow plenty of time when coming for your appointment.

We recommend the Park and Ride service at Langarth (West Truro) and Tregurra (East Truro) which operates a frequent bus service to the Hospital.

Where is the Nuclear Medicine department?

We are located in the basement of the Tower Block. On reaching the basement follow the signs to Nuclear Medicine, which is at the end of the corridor past Medical Physics.

Contact us

If you have any queries or need any further information, please contact the Nuclear Medicine department on 01872 252290.

If for any reason you cannot attend, please inform us so that another patient can have your appointment.

**Please note that the Royal Cornwall
Hospital is a smoke-free environment.
Smoking is not permitted inside the hospital
or on the grounds at any time.**

If you would like this leaflet in large print,
braille, audio version or in another
language, please contact the General
Office on 01872 252690

