



Royal Cornwall Hospitals
NHS Trust

Gastric emptying study



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Who is this leaflet for?

Your doctor would like you to have a Nuclear Medicine Gastric Emptying Study 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 Gastric Emptying Study?

This is a sensitive test which checks for gastro paresis (where the stomach does not empty itself in the normal way). It will show how well your stomach is emptying after a meal.

Please note the radioactive tracer used for this examination contains human blood products.

Are there any alternatives?

Other scans such as X-rays may be performed as well as the Gastric Emptying Study to gather more information.

Do I need to prepare for it?

You must not eat or drink from midnight prior to the day of the study, unless you are diabetic, in which case you must not eat or drink 4 hours before the time of the examination. Please avoid wearing clothing with large metal objects attached as this will affect the images acquired.

What will happen?

After your arrival in the department, you will be taken to a specialised room where a meal of white bread with strawberry jam and an egg white omelette will have been prepared for you.

You will also be provided with some water. There will be a small amount of radioactive tracer mixed in with the omelette. It is very unlikely that you will suffer any side effect to this.

Please note: if you have any allergies or intolerances to any of the foods used for this study then please contact the department as soon as you receive your appointment letter.

How is the study performed?

After you have eaten the meal, you will be taken into another room where you will stand between two camera heads and an image will be acquired for one minute. An additional one minute image will be taken every hour for the following four hours.

During the time of the study you must not eat or drink anything. If you smoke, you must also refrain from smoking for the entire test.

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 56 years may be asked their pregnancy status. If there is any doubt, we will ask you to perform a pregnancy test or rebook your appointment.

If you have any special requirements, suffer from urinary incontinence or have any other medical or physical concerns that you would like to discuss with us, please feel free to call the department and we will be happy to help.

Are there any risks?

We will ensure that the amount of radiation you receive is as small as possible. The amount you will receive is the equivalent to living in Cornwall for two weeks.

Before you are given an appointment, our consultant will consider your clinical details and the test will only be performed if the benefits to you are greater than the risks. Radioactivity 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 pregnant persons or children unless they are the patient.

When will I get my results?

We are unable to give you the results of your study on the day you attend. We will send a report to the doctor who asked us to do the study as soon as possible.

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.

We recommend the Park and Ride service at Langarth (West Truro) and Tregurra

(East Truro) which operates a frequent bus service to the hospital.

www.cornwall.gov.uk/parkfortruro

Please allow plenty of time when coming for your appointment.

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 further advice or information, please contact the department on 01872 252330.

If for any reason you cannot attend, please inform the department as soon as possible so that another patient can have your appointment.

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

