

Procedures/Diagnostic Tests

Lung scan

You are scheduled for a lung scan. This scan helps your doctor learn if there is any change from normal in the bloodflow or airflow in your lungs. It is a safe, effective, and painless way to get picture information (similar to an x-ray) of the blood and air in your lungs. The scan uses small amounts of radioactive materials. The scan will be done in the Nuclear Medicine Department.

Preparation

No special preparation is necessary. You may eat and drink whatever you like before the scan.

Procedure

Bloodflow study

You will receive a small amount of a radioactive compound by vein. Then you will sit in a chair while pictures of your lungs are taken with a very sensitive machine, called a gamma camera. This device receives and records the radiation. Stay very still while these pictures are taken.

Airflow study

Nose clips will be put on your nose, and these may be uncomfortable. Then you will be asked to inhale either a radioactive gas or mist. You will inhale this through a mouthpiece. A gamma camera will be used to follow, with pictures, the airflow in your lungs.

The scan lasts about 1 to 2 hours.

The scan is painless; the only unpleasant sensation you may feel will be the injection in your vein.

If you have questions about the procedure, please ask. Your nurse and doctor are ready to assist you at all times.

Special instructions

- Please inform the doctor if you have an atrial or ventricular septal defect.
- Because it uses radioactivity, this scan is not performed in pregnant women.
If you are pregnant or think you might be pregnant, please inform your doctor immediately so that a decision can be made about this study.

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- *Also, please inform your doctor immediately if you are breast-feeding.* Some scans can be performed in breast-feeding women if they are willing to stop breast-feeding for a while.

This information is prepared specifically for persons taking part in clinical research at the National Institutes of Health Clinical Center and may not apply to patients elsewhere. If you have questions about the information presented here, talk to a member of your health care team.

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Questions about the Clinical Center?
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