

Procedures/Diagnostic Tests

Thyroid scan/thyroid uptake study

You are scheduled for a thyroid scan/thyroid uptake study. These studies help your doctor learn if there is a change from normal in your thyroid gland. They are safe, effective, and painless ways to get picture information of your thyroid gland. The scans use a compound containing a small amount of radioactive material.

The scans are done for diagnostic purposes, and will take place in the Nuclear Medicine Department.

Preparation

Do not eat or drink 2 hours before or 1 hour after you receive the dose of the compound.

You may have only a thyroid scan, or a thyroid scan with thyroid uptakes.

Procedure

Thyroid scan

You will be given a small amount of radioactive iodine to take by mouth 4 hours before the scan. After this time, the scan will be started. You will lie down on an examination table. A pillow will be placed under your shoulders to extend your neck so that the thyroid can be easily scanned. Pictures will be taken with a very sensitive machine, called a gamma camera, that receives and records the radiation in your thyroid gland.

Thyroid scan and thyroid uptake

You will be given a small amount of radioactive iodine by mouth. You will be asked to return either 4 hours and 24 hours later, or only 24 hours later. You will be asked to sit in a chair while a small probe is placed in front of your neck. This probe detects any change from normal in your thyroid gland.

- The scan, without uptake, lasts about 1 hour.
- The scan, with uptake, lasts about 1 1/2 hours.

After the procedure

There are no adverse effects. Your body rids itself of the compound as it does the food you eat.

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

Special instructions

- You should not have had any I.V. contrast for at least 4 weeks before this study.
- Do not eat any seaweed (as in sushi) for 4 weeks before the scan. (I.V. contrast and seaweed contain a lot of iodine, which will interfere with the test.)
- If you take thyroid medications, these should usually be stopped before this test. Ask your doctor if and when you should stop taking these medications.
- Because it uses radioactivity, this study 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.*
- *Also, please inform your doctor immediately if you are breast-feeding.* Some studies 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?
<http://www.cc.nih.gov/comments.shtml>

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