

BENEFITS & RISKS

BENEFITS

- The main benefit of nuclear medicine is the ability to view functions in process in the body – such as blood flow - and the detection of tumors.
- The procedure itself is pain-free and non-invasive.
- The benefit of early and accurate diagnosis far outweighs the risk of receiving the small amount of radioactive material required to do the test.

RISKS

- The patient is exposed to a small amount of radiation similar to that of a regular x-ray. We are continually striving to ensure that precautions are taken to minimize the amount of radiation used for the procedure.
- There is a very small risk of allergic reaction to the radioactive substances.
- If you have any concerns about the safety of the procedure, please talk to your doctor or one of the members of the nuclear medicine team.



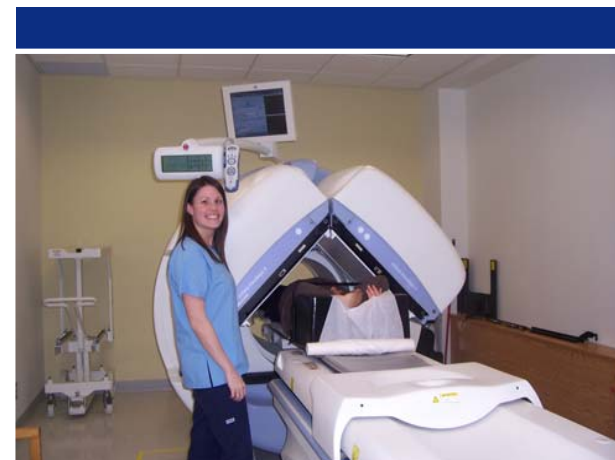
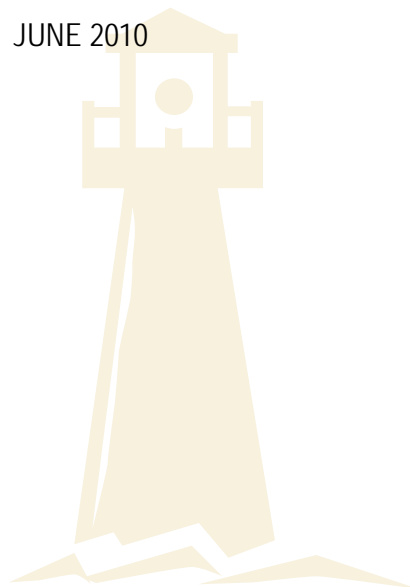
FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

For more information on specific nuclear medicine examinations and procedures please visit:

www.easternhealth.ca

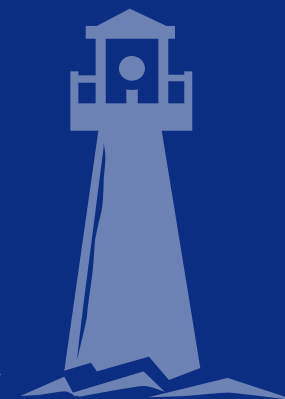
Go to the "Our Services" tab,
Select "Diagnostic Imaging"

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NUCLEAR MEDICINE

www.easternhealth.ca



NUCLEAR MEDICINE

Nuclear Medicine tests are performed by specially trained technologists. Nuclear Medicine enables doctors to view the body's structure and the functioning of organs such as the kidneys, bowels, heart and lungs.

Nuclear Medicine tests use radioactive isotopes, cameras and computers to see the body in both two dimensional and three dimensional imaging similar to CT or MRI. Some cameras can perform both Nuclear Medicine and CT exams at the same time. They are referred to as SPECT/CT Cameras.

Pictures are produced through the detection of energy emitted from the radioactive substances given to the patient. Different radioactive isotopes are absorbed differently by various parts of the body allowing doctors to isolate specific organs and bodily functions.

PREPARATION

Preparation varies by procedure. Instructions for preparation are specific to the examination you are booked for and will be included in the letter you receive to advise you of your appointment date and time. The doctor who ordered your examination may also give you information about the required preparation. Prior to the examination, patients are asked to remove jewelry and metal objects and to wear a gown.

PROCEDURE

Prior to the nuclear medicine procedure the patient is given a radioactive substance. This can be given by injection, swallowed or inhaled.

Depending on the procedure, x-rays may begin immediately or may take place up to several days later.



The patient must lie still on a table while a camera takes pictures. The camera does not produce radiation - it picks up signals from the radioactive isotope you received before the test. The procedure is painless and on average takes anywhere from 45 minutes up to several hours. It could require more than one visit, possibly even on multiple days.

The nuclear medicine technologist or the doctor who ordered your test will explain this to you before your procedure.



Heart scan

WHO REPORTS THE PROCEDURE?

Your test will be reported by a Nuclear Medicine Physician. Nuclear Medicine Physicians are doctors who are specially trained to interpret the images.

Your doctor should receive a signed report within 10 business days. You should follow-up with your doctor to discuss the results of your test.

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

Please inform the technologist before the start of your test if:

- there is any possibility that you could be pregnant
- you are breast feeding
- you have a history of allergies