

FAQs ABOUT NUCLEAR MEDICINE

What is nuclear medicine?

Nuclear medicine uses small amounts of radioactive material called radioactive tracers to look at the details of organs and tissue in your body. Nuclear medicine is different from other scans because it shows how an organ is working, along with what it looks like. A gamma camera and/or probe is used with the radioactive tracers to make images of the part of your body that your doctor needs to see.

Are there any special rules I need to follow before my test?

You will receive specific instructions based on the type of scan you are having (for example food and drink restrictions, medicine directions, or directions about whether you need to have a full or empty bladder). You should always let your doctor or technologist know if you are pregnant or could be pregnant, or if you are breastfeeding.

What happens during a nuclear medicine test?

The radioactive tracers will be given to you in one of three ways: as an injection in your skin or a vein, breathing in a gas, or by mouth. Your doctor will decide the method based on the type of test you are having. Once the test starts, the gamma camera may move down your body, rotate around you, or stay in one place.

How long will my test take?

The length of time for the test depends on the type of test. Scanning can take 20 minutes to several hours, and some tests may be done over a period of a couple days.

Can I be around people after my nuclear medicine test?

You are able to be around anyone after the test, unless the technologist or radiologist gives you different directions.