

Having a gastric emptying study of your stomach

Nuclear Medicine

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Information for Patients

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What is a gastric emptying study?

This is a test that will show how quickly your stomach empties after a meal. It is done with a radioactive scan. It will be carried out by a Nuclear Medicine technician.

If you cannot attend your appointment please call 0116 258 5627 to rearrange at least 3 days before so that we can try to offer your appointment to someone else.

Before your appointment you must tell us if:

- you are pregnant, think you may be pregnant, or have just missed a period.
- you are breastfeeding. This is because radioactive substances can come out in breast milk. You may be advised to stop breastfeeding for a short time.
- you have any incontinence problems. This is because radioactive substances will be present in your pee (urine). You may need special instructions because of this.
- you have problems with your memory or learning difficulties. We need to make sure you can follow all the instructions for your test and after you go home.
- You have help with personal care (paid or unpaid). Your carer may need some safety instructions after you have had your dose of radiation.
- you need an interpreter. Please tell us at least 3 days before your appointment.
- you have any food allergies or intolerances.

**Health information and support is available at www.nhs.uk
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk

How do I prepare for the scan?

- Do not smoke, eat or drink anything for 8 hours before your appointment time.
- Do not consume anything containing alcohol for 24 hours before your appointment time.
- We will check your medications before booking your appointment. If there have been any recent changes, please let us know.
- You must stop any opioid painkillers, such as codeine or morphine, for 24 hours before your test. You can take paracetamol, aspirin or ibuprofen.
- If you are diabetic or if you have any allergies or any food intolerances, please contact the Nuclear Medicine Service on 0116 258 5627.

What happens during the scan?

We will explain the procedure to you and you can ask any questions.

You will eat a meal of radioactive porridge to eat. We then use a special camera (called a gamma camera) to take pictures of your stomach.

Straight after you have had your meal, you will need to stand between the 2 camera heads for a short time. We will then take pictures of your stomach. You will not need to take your clothes off for this procedure.

The camera will come quite close, but will not touch you. You may be left alone in the room for short periods while we start your images. You will not need to stay in the camera room for the whole of the test.

We will take pictures of your stomach throughout the day. We will confirm the times during your appointment. The test takes about 5 hours in total.

What happens after the scan?

You will be radioactive after your test for the next 24 hours. To lower any risk to you and others you come into contact with, we ask you to:

- drink plenty of extra fluids.
- flush the toilet well after use (men should sit down when going for a pee).
- wash your hands thoroughly each time you use the toilet.
- usually there is no problem in returning to work, but please ask staff for advice if you work with radiation or in the photographic industry.

Are there any risks?

It is very unlikely that you will have any side effects from the radioactive meal.

There is a small risk linked to the radiation you get by having this scan. Ionising radiation can cause cell damage that may, after many years or decades, turn cancerous. We are all at risk of developing cancer during our lifetime. The normal risk is that this will happen to about 50% of people at some point in their life.

The dose of radiation you will get from this test is very small. It is the same dose you would get from the environment over about 9 months. Having this test will add only a very small chance of this happening to you. The risks from missing a serious disorder by not having this test may be much higher.

How will I get my results?

A doctor who specialises in reading medical images (radiologist) will look at your scan. The results will be passed onto your consultant. They will be discussed with you at your next outpatient appointment.

Useful information

You may wish to bring a relative or friend with you. Due to the nature of the test, friends and relatives will not be allowed into the room during the procedure, unless we need their help.

Please do not bring children or pregnant women with you to your appointment. Radiation is more dangerous for children and pregnant women. It is advised not to bring them into the Nuclear Medicine Department unless they are coming for a scan.

If you need hospital transport, please see our website <https://www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk> or call TASL on 0345 241 3012 at least 3 days before your appointment.

Directions to Nuclear Medicine

- Leicester Royal Infirmary – Level 0, Sandringham Building (near Osborne Building).
- Glenfield Hospital – the department is best reached by the east entrance.

Contact details

For specific information about your test, please contact (the answer machine is checked during office hours):

Leicester Royal Infirmary: 0116 258 5627

Glenfield Hospital: 0116 258 3850

Leicester Radiopharmacy Service: 0116 258 5579

If you have a question about your medical condition please contact your GP or the doctor who referred you for this test.

