

Having a lung VQ scan

Department of Nuclear Medicine

Information for Patients

Last reviewed: June 2024

Updated: July 2025

Next review: June 2027

Leaflet number: 858 Version: 4.1

What is a lung VQ scan?

This is a safe and simple procedure. It uses a small amount of radioactivity to take images of your lungs.

If you cannot come to your appointment please call 0116 258 3850 to rearrange at least 3 days before so we can try to offer your appointment to someone else. You may get a reminder by text message if we have your mobile phone number on our system.

You must tell us if:

- You are pregnant, think you may be pregnant, or have just missed a period. You can in most circumstances still have the test. You must let us know if of this. The clinical benefits outweigh the risks.
- You are breastfeeding. This is because radioactive substances can come out in breast milk. You may be told to stop breastfeeding for a short time.
- You have problems holding your pee (incontinence). This is because radioactive substances will be in your pee (urine) and you may need special instructions because of this.
- You have problems with your memory or learning difficulties.
- You need an interpreter (please tell us at least 3 days before you appointment).
- You have a carer come into your home to help you, live in a care home, or provide care to someone.

If you are arriving by **ambulance** please contact the department as soon as possible.

**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?

Please make sure you drink plenty of water before coming. You can eat and take any medication as normal.

If you are breastfeeding, you may be asked to express milk before the scan.

When you arrive

We will explain the test and you will have a chance to ask questions.

All patients aged 10 to 55 years are asked if there is any chance that they could be pregnant, and if they are breastfeeding. This might seem odd, but it is because of the radiation and is required by law. If there is any possibility you could be pregnant, you may be asked to do a pregnancy test.

What happens during the scan?

Part 1

- You may remain dressed
- You will be asked to breathe through a mouthpiece. A clip will be put on your nose so you must breathe through your mouth only.
- The air you will breathe in contains a small amount of radioactivity. It has no taste or smell.
- We will then do the first scan.

Part 2

- We will give you a radioactive injection in a vein in your arm. This is no more painful than a blood test. We will then do the second scan.

The gamma camera will be quite close to you for both scans. This allows us to get good quality images. You will be lying flat and on your back, and must remain as still as possible.

The whole test will take about 1 hour.

What happens after the scan?

You will be mildly radioactive for 24 hours after you have had your injection. To reduce any risk to you and others we ask you to:

- Drink plenty of extra fluids.
- Flush the toilet 2 times after each use (men should sit down when going for a pee).
- Wash your hands thoroughly each time you use the toilet.
- You can usually go back to work without any problem. Please ask staff for advice if you work with radiation or in the photographic industry.
- If you are breastfeeding, we will ask you to stop for a short time period. We will give you another information leaflet about this.

Are there any risks?

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

There is a small risk from the radiation you get from having this scan.

Ionising radiation can cause cell damage that may, after many years or decades, turn cancerous. We are all at risk of getting cancer during our lifetime. About 50% of people will get cancer at some point in their life.

The dose of radiation you will get from this test is very small. It is the same amount you would get from the environment in about 10 months. Having this test will only increase your risk of getting cancer by a very small amount.

If you have a VQ scan whilst pregnant, the extra chance of your unborn baby getting cancer in childhood is between 1 in 100,000 and 1 in 10,000. This is a very low risk.

The risks from missing a serious disorder by not having this test may be much bigger.

How will I get my results?

Your scan will be looked at by a Radiologist and the results passed on to your Consultant or referring ward. They will then be discussed with you as soon as possible.

Useful information

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

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

If you need hospital transport, please see our website www.uhleicester.nhs.uk/ or call our Patient Transport Service (TASL) on **0345 241 3012** at least 3 days before your appointment.

More information

For information about your scan, please contact (answering machine 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 sent you for this scan.

Directions to Nuclear Medicine

- **Leicester Royal Infirmary:** Level 0, Sandringham Building (Between the multistorey carpark and Osborne building)
- **Glenfield hospital:** The department is best reached via the East Entrance, next to the Breast Care Centre.

Useful websites

- www.informed-scan.com/types-of-imaging/nuclear-medicine
- www.bnms.org.uk/page/PatientsCarers
- www.radiologyinfo.org

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔
على هذه المعلومات بلغة أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل
જો તમને અન્ય ભાષામાં આ માહિતી જોઈતી હોય, તો નીચે આપેલ નંબર પર કૃપા કરી ટેલિફોન કરો
ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਗਏ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।
Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić pod podany niżej numer telefonu

If you would like this information in another language or format such as EasyRead or Braille, please telephone 0116 250 2959 or email equality@uhl-tr.nhs.uk