

Information for patients and carers

DMSA Scan

A decorative graphic at the bottom of the page consisting of three overlapping, wavy bands of blue. The top band is a light blue, the middle is a medium blue, and the bottom is a dark blue.

What is a DMSA scan?

This is a way of looking at the function of your kidneys. The procedure involves an injection followed by a scan using a gamma camera similar to the one shown in the image below.



Please inform us before you attend:

- If you are, or think, you may be pregnant
- If you are breast/chest feeding
- If you weigh over 25 stones (158 Kilograms)
- If you have problems with mobility and/or need a hoist to transfer

Preparation for the scan

There are no special preparations for a DMSA scan, so you can eat, drink and take any medications as normal. For children under the age of 8, you will attend the paediatric ward prior to the Nuclear Medicine department. This is for the insertion of a small plastic tube called a cannula into a vein. The time and details of your appointment have been included in your appointment letter.

Can you bring a relative or friend with you?

A relative or friend can accompany you to the hospital but usually they will not be allowed into the room when you have your examination. Please note that we have limited seating and do not have childcare facilities, therefore small children should not attend your appointment.

Your scan

A radiographer will inject a small amount of radioactive tracer (in a liquid form) into a vein in your hand or arm. There are usually no side effects from the injection. The images are taken 2 to 3 hours later when the radioactive tracer has settled into the kidneys. During this time you may leave the department and eat and drink as normal.

We advise that you drink extra fluids for the rest of the day to help reduce the radiation in your body. We will tell you how much to drink when you come and if you are on restricted fluids we will give you further advice.

You will be asked to go to the toilet to empty your bladder so that clearer images are produced. You will be asked to empty your pockets and remove any metal objects such as braces, jewellery and belts. If the scan is for your baby it may be necessary to change your child's nappy prior to the scan; facilities are provided within the department.

For the scan you will lie on your back on the scanning table. Special cameras which are about the size of a large suitcase will come close to you during the scan but you will not be enclosed in a tunnel.

You will not be left on your own as there will be someone close by at all times. The scans usually take 25 minutes. For babies and small children, this time is often reduced to approximately 5 – 10 minutes.

Side effects

We do not expect any side effects from the injection.

Are there any risks?

All medical procedures and tests carry both risks and benefits. Your doctor has requested this scan as they feel the information that we will gain is a greater benefit than the risk from being exposed to radiation. Our injections contain a small amount of radioactivity that emits gamma rays (these are similar to x-rays). We use the smallest dose possible, in line with national regulations to provide as much information as we can about your condition.

The results of your scan will give your doctor useful information about your condition and will help to plan your treatment.

After the scan

After your scan you must continue to follow the advice about drinking that you were given after the injection. You are free to go home or go back to work. Please avoid spending a long time in close contact with young children or pregnant women for the rest of the day. You should aim to spend no more than 15 minutes each hour cuddling or sitting next to them. It is also best if you do not share a bed with a child or a pregnant woman on the evening of your scan.

Travel abroad

Please inform the radiographer on arrival if you intend to travel abroad within 7 days of your scan. Radiation monitoring at security at airports or ports may detect some of the radiation you have received during your scan. We will give you a letter that will state what test you have had and this can be used when travelling.

Your results

The images will be reviewed after your visit. You will be advised when and how you will receive your results at this time. You will not receive any results on the day of the scan.

Contact details

Should you require further advice or information please contact:
Nuclear Medicine on **01772 522381**.

Sources of further information

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk

www.nhs.uk

www.patient.co.uk

www.accessable.co.uk

www.gov.uk/government/publications/ionising-radiation-from-medical-imaging-examinations-safety-advice/exposure-to-ionising-radiation-from-medical-imaging-safety-advice

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www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets

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If you want to stop smoking, you can also contact Smokefree Lancashire on Freephone 08081962638

**Please ask a member of staff if you would like help in understanding this information.
This information can be made available in large print, audio, Braille and in other languages.**

Department: Radiology/Nuclear Medicine
Division: Diagnostics and Clinical Support
Production date: February 2024
Review date: February 2027
JR 1100 v1