

Nuclear Medicine Tests

Common scans include: Gastric Reflux, Gastric Emptying, Hepatobiliary, Whole body and Thyroid scan

Our Mission

Nicklaus Children's Hospital's mission is to inspire hope and promote lifelong health by providing the best care to every child. We focus on family-centered care in order to provide an optimal experience for patients and their families. We believe that parents and guardians play a vital role in the success of this test and want you to have an active role in your child's healthcare. The following information is to help prepare both you and your child for the scheduled exam.

What are Nuclear Medicine Tests?

- Nuclear medicine is a type of imaging that uses small, safe amounts of radioactive medicine to diagnose, treat and track the treatment of diseases.
- Nuclear medicine tests specifically show any changes that may be taking place inside the body.
- There are several types of nuclear medicine scans. All of these scans use radioactive medicine, administered either by mouth or by injection, depending on the part of the body needed to photograph. For example: If your child is receiving a scan of the stomach for a gastric reflux or gastric emptying study, the child will be instructed to take the radioisotope by mouth.
- If your child is receiving a scan of the bones, thyroid, or kidneys, the child will be administered the isotope via injection with numbing medication.
- The scans are not painful and may take up to a few minutes to a few hours to complete, depending on the type of test.
- To get the best results, your child will be asked to hold still during the test.
- Children are able to complete the scans without sedation for most of the tests. If for any reason your child may need extra help holding still, your child can be rescheduled at a later time under sedation or general anesthesia.

What to Expect the Day of the Exam

Step 1: Getting Ready

- A member of the nuclear medicine team will prepare a radioactive pharmaceutical according to your child's weight.
- If given by mouth, the technologist will mix the isotope into food provided by our cafeteria or it can be mixed with food brought from home.
- If given through injection, *numbing medication may be used to make the child more comfortable.*
- Once the radiopharmaceutical has reached the intended area, the technologist will begin taking pictures.

Nuclear Medicine Tests

Step 2: Taking Pictures

- Your child will be asked to lie down on the exam bed to begin taking the pictures.
- To make sure that your child is laying in the right position, the technologists may move the bed or camera around until it is in the correct position for the scan.
- Remind your child that they are only getting their pictures taken and that it does not hurt.
- You are strongly encouraged to stay next to your child during the scan to help him or her feel relaxed and help the child hold still. You can encourage playing with a favorite toy, singing songs, or playing games on a smart phone or tablet during the test.

Step 3: The Results

Results will usually be sent to your doctor within 48 hours.

Child Life Specialists

A part of the Child Life Specialist's role in the Radiology Department is to help children and families cope with the anxiety and fear associated with medical procedures. A Child Life Specialist may be available on the day of the exam to provide education and coping strategies. For more information, please contact Nicklaus Children's Hospital's Children's Experiences Department at 305-666-6511 extension 4875 and select #1.