

THYROID UPTAKE AND SCAN

PATIENT PREPARATION

Patients must be off iodine-containing drugs, including radiographic contrast! The minimum time interval between prior iodine administration and scanning varies from one week (e.g. iodine solution) to 4 weeks (Synthroid) to 2-10 years (oil-based Myelogram). If the patient has had an IVP or a CT with IV contrast, a thyroid scan should not be attempted for 4-6 weeks. Many other medications interfere with scanning (PCN, antihistamines, Amiodarone, etc.). Make sure that all medications that the patient is taking are listed on the requisition.

Patient must not have any food or drink for 4 hours prior to their exam.

PROCEDURE

The uptake and scan procedures involve three visits to the Nuclear Medicine Department. On the first day the patient will be asked to swallow a small amount of radioactive iodine. The drink is tasteless and has no side effects. This visit should take approximately fifteen minutes. Two hours later, the patient must return for a measurement of their thyroids radioiodine uptake.

On the following day, the patient will return for another measurement of the radioiodine uptake, as well as an injection of a second radioactive tracer. This second tracer allows a picture to be taken of the thyroid gland.

The uptake procedure measures the percent absorption of radioactive iodine by the thyroid gland. For the uptake measurement, the patient sits comfortably in a chair, and a detector will be positioned several inches from the neck. The amount of the radioiodine in the thyroid gland will be measured. This will take approximately five minutes.

For the scan, the patient will lie on their back on an imaging table with the camera positioned above them. The image takes up to five minutes. After imaging, a nuclear medicine physician may examine the gland. We may then take additional images to look at a certain part of the gland in detail. The procedures on the second day will take 60 - 90 minutes.