

Imaging Patient Education

What you should know about your Gastric Emptying Scan:

Purpose:

Nuclear medicine uses small amounts of radioactive material to diagnose and sometimes treat disease. Nuclear medicine procedures provide images that show how organs and tissues work. These procedures are noninvasive and very safe. More than 20 million Americans benefit each year from nuclear medicine procedures. A gastric emptying scan is performed to diagnose the rate at which the stomach empties.

Preparation:

- You will be asked not to eat or drink eight hours before your test.

Procedure:

- You will be asked to verify your name, date of birth, and exam you will be having done.
- We will take a brief medical history.
- You will be given a meal consisting of egg, toast, and juice. The egg contains a small amount of radioactive material, but the taste will not be altered. (If you are allergic to eggs, special arrangements must be made prior to the scan for a suitable replacement).
- After eating the egg, you will have images taken over the stomach. One image is taken immediately and then at 30, 60, and 120 minutes. You will be standing for the images or laying down depending on your ability to stand.
- Imaging may continue up to 4 hours.

After the Test:

- No reactions or special precautions.
- Your exam will be evaluated by a radiologist and the report will be sent to your physician.

Risks and Benefits:

The amount of radiation used in most nuclear medicine procedures is comparable to and often less than that of a diagnostic x-ray. Only small amounts of radioactive material are used and this material is quickly eliminated from the body. Side effects of nuclear medicine procedures are very rare. Nuclear medicine is generally not recommended for women who are pregnant or breastfeeding.

If you have questions or need additional information,
please call the Nuclear Medicine Department: (717) 339-2027.