Imaging Patient Education

What you should know about your Hepatobiliary 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 hepatobiliary scan is performed to evaluate your gallbladder and bile ducts.

Preparation:

• You will be asked to not eat or drink after midnight.
• Narcotic pain medication should be discontinued 12-24 hours prior to 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 have an IV started in your arm.
• An injection of a radioactive isotope will be given through the IV. There are no side effects from this injection.
• You will lie down for your exam. You will be made as comfortable as possible and asked to lie still during the exam.
• The exam will take approximately one hour.
• Images are taken of you abdomen continuously over one hour.
• If visualization of the gallbladder does not occur after one hour of imaging, you may be asked to return for delay images 2-4 hours later.

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.