

Molecular Imaging - Your Child's Visit

Patient Information - Nuclear Medicine Department

What is Molecular Imaging

Your child's doctor has asked for a Molecular Imaging scan to provide information about your child's growth, organ function or to explain the cause of pain. Our Department performs lots of scans on children and babies every year.

Molecular Imaging uses small amounts of a radioactive tracer to obtain pictures. This procedure is often referred to as a scan. You can find out more about Molecular Imaging by visiting [Health New Zealand Te Whatu Ora Molecular Imaging](#)



Preparing your child for their appointment

The appointment letter will tell you if there are any special instructions for your child to follow, **please read it carefully**. Some scans will require dietary or medication changes, you are welcome to phone the department on **03 364 0867** to discuss any details.

Please phone the department ASAP before your child's appointment if you are **pregnant** or **may be pregnant**.

Please bring with you something that is familiar to your child e.g. a toy, book or device. You are most welcome to bring along a relative or friend for support, however it is best to leave other children at home.

What to expect during your appointment

Most scans require an IV injection. Parents/Caregivers of babies and younger children will be sent an appointment and information from Children's Outpatients, where an IV line will be inserted approximately 1 hour before our appointment.

The amount of radioactivity is kept as low as possible because it is individually calculated for your child. All children and babies are weighed on arrival.

The IV line inserted earlier will be used for the injection. You may hold your child during the injection if you wish.

After the injection, the scan may begin immediately or there may be a waiting time while the injection localises in the area of the body being studied.

During the scan

We use velcro bands to keep younger children safe during the scan however movement is not totally restricted.

Distractions such as reading a book, watching and listening to a device are usually effective in limiting movement.

You may stay close to your child during the scan. Babies may be more settled if they have the comfort of a pacifier, bottle or toy.

After the scan

A specialist doctor will report the scan, the results are then forwarded electronically to the doctor who requested the scan. Your GP will be able to access the results electronically.

The radioactive tracer used has a short life and is quickly eliminated through the urine or faeces and most will have disappeared naturally from your child's body by the next day. Therefore, it is preferable to use disposable nappies for the day of the scan. At home normal hygiene measures are enough and no special precautions are necessary.

While we do not consider the radiation emitted from your child a hazard, we have the responsibility to keep radiation exposure to others as low as possible. For this reason, we may recommend the following;

- Your child should not sleep in the same bed as other children for 24 hours after the scan.
- Your child should not go back to school, kindergarten or crèche until the day after the scan.
- If you are pregnant it is better to avoid close continuous contact with your child e.g. sitting on your knee for more than 5 minutes in an hour. This applies during the first 6 hours after administration of the radioactivity.
- You can continue breastfeeding, there are no problems for you or your child.

Side effects are very rare. The injection should not make your child feel sick or sleepy. If you have any concerns or questions about these procedures, talk to your GP or one of the Molecular Imaging staff.

How to find Molecular Imaging

Molecular Imaging is located at Christchurch Hospital on the 2nd Floor of the Riverside Block. You can get to Molecular Imaging through the main hospital entrance on Riccarton Ave. A map is enclosed along with your appointment letter.

The "Heading to Christchurch Hospital?" brochure contains information on Park & Ride, Drop-off, and Mobility Parking. You can also visit the Health New Zealand Te Whatu Ora website [Health New Zealand Te Whatu Ora Parking](#).

Please either allow extra time for parking or get someone to drop you off.