

Molecular Imaging - Your Visit

Patient Information - Nuclear Medicine Department

What is Molecular Imaging

Molecular Imaging is a branch of medicine that uses small amounts of radioactive tracer to obtain pictures that show how different organs of the body function. This procedure is often referred to as a scan. The scan pictures will help your doctor make a diagnosis or assess your condition. You can find out more about Molecular Imaging by visiting www.cdhb.health.nz/nuclearmedicine



Preparing for your appointment

Your appointment letter will tell you if there are any special instructions, **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 appointment if you are **pregnant, may be pregnant or breastfeeding**.

We welcome you to bring a support person along to your appointment, however please do not bring children along.

What to expect during your appointment

A small amount of radioactive tracer is usually injected into a vein in your arm. This feels similar to having a blood test. The radioactive tracer used has a short life and is quickly eliminated from the body.

For some scans we will take the pictures immediately, for other scan types they need to be at a later time, this will show in your appointment letter. If you have more than an hour to wait, you will be able to leave the department during this time.

Once in the scanning room, you will lie on the scanning bed. A camera is positioned close to the area of the body being studied. The camera quietly picks up the signals from the radioactive tracer you received earlier.

You will not feel any discomfort during the scan, it is important to lie as still as possible and our staff will assist you with this. For some studies a short CT scan may also be required, you may need to remove some clothing/metal objects for this. If you have someone accompanying you, they will be asked to leave the room during the CT part of the scan. Your appointment letter will tell you approximately how long your scan will take.

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 from the body. For some scans, adults are advised to avoid close continuous contact with children and pregnant women for the rest of the day, we will let you know if this will affect you.

It is safe to share a bed with your partner on the night of the scan, unless otherwise directed. There are no restrictions for handling pets.

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

How to find the Nuclear Medicine Department

The Nuclear Medicine Department is located at Christchurch Hospital on the 2nd Floor of the Riverside Block. You can get to the Department 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 CDHB website; cdhb.health.nz/parking

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

For more information about:

- hospital and specialist services, go to www.cdhb.health.nz
- your health and medication, go to www.healthinfo.org.nz