



**University  
Hospitals Sussex**  
NHS Foundation Trust

# DMSA scan

Department of Nuclear Medicine

Patient information

## **What is a DMSA scan?**

A DMSA scan is used to check how well your kidneys are working. It is also used to show any potentially scarred areas in your kidneys, causing them not to work well as they should.

## **What if I have a urine infection?**

If you have had a urine infection in the four months before your appointment date, please ring us as we may need to change your appointment.

## **Can I have a DMSA scan if I am pregnant?**

If there is a possibility that you are pregnant, please inform the department before your appointment, as your appointment may need to be postponed. The risk to your baby from this radiation exposure is low.

## **Can I have a DMSA scan if I am breastfeeding or chest/bottle-feeding?**

Please inform the department before your appointment if you are currently breastfeeding or bottle-feeding your breastmilk to your child, as you may need to stop for a day. If you are currently chestfeeding or bottle-feeding your child formula milk please inform the department before your appointment.

## **Can I have a DMSA scan if I am on dialysis?**

Please inform the department if you are on any form of dialysis, as it may be necessary to co-ordinate your nuclear medicine appointment with your dialysis treatment.

## **Can I bring someone with me?**

Whenever possible, only the patient should attend their appointment unless you are a parent accompanying a child or a carer for a patient with additional needs.

## What will happen at my appointment?

A radioactive substance will be injected into a vein, usually in your arm or the back of your hand, which is then absorbed by the kidneys.

It can take between two and three hours for the radioactive substance to reach the kidneys. During this time, we ask you to leave the department and return at a later time on that same day or your scan. If this is not possible please let us know.

## What happens when I return for my scan?

You will be required to lie still on our imaging bed, while three pictures are taken from the front and back. Each picture can take up to 10 minutes.

You do not normally have to undress but we will ask you to remove any heavy or metal objects such as a belt.



Occasionally images may be repeated or extra images obtained if necessary. Depending on how many pictures are needed, the scan will take approximately 45 minutes.

If you have young children or pregnant friends/family please limit close contact with them for the rest of the day. You can be in the same room but avoid sitting close to each other for long periods.

## What happens after my appointment?

To protect other people from radiation, plan to keep a distance of at least 1 metre for a few hours. This is long enough for some of the radioactivity to decay and for your body to remove the rest. Brief close contact such as queuing or walking past others is safe. Remember to use good hygiene precautions during this time to prevent contamination.

Eat as normal and keep well hydrated.

## When will I get my results?

The report will be sent to your referring doctor. They will contact you to discuss the results. If you have any enquiries regarding your results please contact the department where the referral was originally made.

## Are there any risks?

The radioactive tracer administered will expose you to a small amount of ionising radiation, consistent with the desired diagnostic outcome.

The risks are very low and the benefits of having the results from the DMSA scan greatly outweigh the risk.

## Contact details

### Royal Sussex County Hospital (RSCH)

Nuclear Medicine Department

Phone **01273 523040** choose option 5

### Princess Royal Hospital (PRH)

Imaging Department Nuclear Medicine Department

Phone **01273 523040** choose option 5

**This leaflet is intended for patients receiving care in Brighton & Hove or Haywards Heath**

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