



**University
Hospitals Sussex**
NHS Foundation Trust

HIDA scan

Department of Nuclear Medicine

Patient information

What is a HIDA scan?

HIDA scan is an examination of the gall bladder and associated ducts around the liver.

Can I have a HIDA scan if I am pregnant or breastfeeding?

If there is a possibility that you are pregnant or if you are currently breastfeeding please inform the department before your appointment as we will likely have to re-schedule.

Can I bring someone with me?

Whenever possible, you should attend your appointment alone, unless you need a carer to support any additional needs.

How long will my appointment take?

Please allow three hours for your appointment.

What happens before my appointment?

- Do not eat for four hours before your appointed time (but no longer than 24hrs as this can affect your gallbladder filling).
- Please do not smoke (or use nicotine in any form) on the day of your scan as this can interfere with the quality of the pictures.
- Please bring food that has a high fat content (chocolate, pasty or similar) with you as you will be required to have this during the scan.

Do I need to stop my medication?

It is important you complete and return the enclosed green form. Please list all medication that you are taking including over the counter drugs. Some drugs need to be stopped two days before your appointment.

What will happen at my appointment?

Firstly a cannula will be placed into a vein in your arm or back of the hands.

After this you will be taken into the scan room and positioned onto an imaging bed with a camera placed above your abdomen. Once in position you will have a small amount of radioactive tracer injected through the cannula. This will go to your liver and gallbladder and then will be excreted into the bowel. It emits gamma rays which will be detected by a piece of equipment called a gamma camera.

Immediately after injection, the first set of imaging begins which takes one hour. It is important that you remain as still as possible for your scan.

After the first set of images you will be asked to have something to eat. Then we will carry out another scan for one hour.

All images will be checked before you leave the department. Occasionally images may be repeated or extra images acquired if necessary.



A HIDA scan

Do I need to undress for the scan?

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

What happens after my appointment?

After the appointment you can resume all usual activities.
Eat as normal and keep well hydrated.

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.

This is to avoid them receiving any unnecessary radiation exposure.

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 with this procedure?

The radioactive tracer administered will expose you to a small amount of ionising radiation.

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

Contact details

Royal Sussex County Hospital (RSCH)

Nuclear Medicine Department, Louisa Martindale Building

Eastern Road, Brighton BN2 5BE

01273 523040 choose option 5

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

Ref. number: 2711 Publication date: 02/2026 Review date: 02/2029

© University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust Disclaimer:
The information in this leaflet is for guidance purposes only and is in no way intended to replace professional clinical advice by a qualified practitioner.

