

Nuclear Medicine **DMSA Kidney Scan**

Patient Information Sheet

A DMSA kidney scan is a diagnostic procedure, which looks at how well the kidneys are working. It involves an injection of a small amount of radioactive tracer and imaging with a gamma camera.

Preparation for your appointment

You may eat and take your medication as normal. **Infection in the 8 weeks before your scan the scan may not be clinically appropriate and may need to be re-booked. Please ring the department on the number below if this is the case.**

In the 24 hour period before your appointment drink at least 1 litre of fluids (preferably water). This will make giving the injection easier. You can use the toilet as often as you need to.

If possible, please come to your appointment alone as we can only accommodate a small number of people in our waiting room.

Are there any risks from the radioactive tracer?

The radioactive tracer is used as sparingly as possible and the benefits of this scan far outweigh the small risk from radiation. The radiation dose you will receive is similar to the radiation received from natural sources over three months. Drinking plenty of fluids and emptying your bladder regularly will help to remove the radiation. There are no restrictions for spending time with others after your scan. You should use the toilet sitting down for **24 hours** to avoid splashes as your urine will be slightly radioactive.

Pregnancy and Breastfeeding

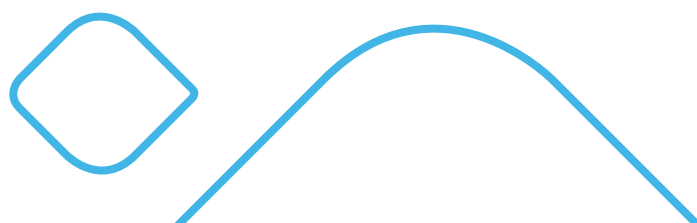
Let us know in advance if you may be pregnant or are breastfeeding.

This is important because of the small risk of childhood cancer from the radiation that we use.

If you have male healthcare records and were registered female at birth, please talk to the technologist at your appointment so that they can rule out the possibility of pregnancy. This information will not be recorded or shared without your consent.

How is the scan performed?

- A small amount of radioactive tracer will be injected into a vein in your arm. This will not make you feel any different and will not affect your ability to drive home.
- The scan will be performed **2-3 hours after injection**, this delay is necessary to allow the injection to be absorbed into your kidneys. The scan will be performed with you lying on your back and will take approximately **20-30 minutes**. You will not need to remove any clothing. You will be asked to remove metal such as keys, loose change and belt.



After your scan

Results

Results will be sent to the doctor or specialist who referred you for the scan in 2/3 weeks.

Travelling after your scan

Some major event/ transport venues have very sensitive radiation detectors. These detectors could be triggered by the small amount of radioactivity remaining in your body on the days following your scan. If you're planning to travel within **seven days** following your scan, we recommend that you carry your appointment letter with you.

Information for other hospitals or care homes

*Within the **four days** following your scan:*

If you are admitted to a care home or hospital (other than the RUH), or if you are cared for by a healthcare worker in your home, please ask them to contact the RUH Clinical Imaging and Measurement Department. Their employer might need to register with the Health and Safety Executive to show that their staff are aware of the small amount of radioactivity that is present for a few days after your scan.

If you have any concerns or questions about your scan, or you need this information in another format such as larger print, please telephone: **01225 824080**

Clinical Imaging and Measurement Department
Zone B, Department B58
Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust
Combe Park, Bath, BA1 3NG
01225 824080 | www.ruh.nhs.uk

Please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) if you would like to feedback your experience of the hospital. Email ruh-tr.pals@nhs.net or telephone **01225 825656**

Date of publication: November 2025 | Ref: RUH NM/57v8

© Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust