



Having an Octreotide scan as an outpatient

An Octreotide scan is a nuclear medicine test involving radiation to visualise abnormalities in the body's neuro-endocrine system. The scan is performed over 2-3 days with some preparation beforehand.

Is it safe for me to have the scan?

There are some small risks associated with exposure to radiation. However, the doctor who referred you for the scan has taken this into consideration and has concluded that the small risks are outweighed by the diagnostic benefit of the scan. An Octreotide scan can provide important information which may be used to aid your future treatment and management. There is a table at the end of the leaflet with radiation risks from various sources.

Could you be pregnant?

For this test, we need to take extra precautions to ensure you are not pregnant. If you are between the ages of 12 – 56, we need to rule out the possibility of pregnancy. We will need to plan this test around the beginning of your menstrual cycle (day 1 of your period): please contact the department to arrange this.

If you know you are pregnant, the test may be postponed until another time. Also contact the department if you are breastfeeding, as you may be given special instructions.

Preparation for your scan

- Please contact us if you have been prescribed any Octreotide medications, including Lanreotide, Octreotide, Sandostatin and Somatuline.
- The day before the scan, please take a dose of mild laxative (such as Lactulose liquid, senna tablets or Bisacodyl tablets), available from your local pharmacy. You should continue to take a laxative every day until the test has finished. This ensures that your bowel is clear so we can acquire high quality pictures of the part of the body in which we are interested. It will also reduce your radiation dose. **If you suffer from chronic diarrhoea, it is not necessary to take a laxative. Please mention this when you attend for your appointment.**
- You should be well hydrated before and during the whole test. This will reduce your radiation exposure.
- You can continue to eat normally throughout the duration of the test.

What should I expect from my Octreotide scan?

You will need to attend the Medical Physics Department on two or three consecutive days for this test. On Day 1, you will be given an injection of a radioactive tracer into a vein in your arm or hand which will feel similar to a blood test. We will test your blood sugar before and after the injection to check for any changes, as Octreotide can affect your blood sugar levels.

If you have diabetes, please inform the Medical Physics Department before attending. After your injection, you will be asked to return to the department four hours later.

The scan involves taking a series of pictures using a gamma camera. You may be asked to wear a hospital gown for the scan or remove any clothing with metal items, such as zips or clasps.

For the pictures, you will be lying down on your back and an image will be taken from the top of your head to the top of your thighs. After this, we will take a 3D picture of your abdomen. In total this can take up to 1 and a half hours.

You will be asked to return the next day to take the same set of pictures. This time, we also perform an additional 2-minute CT scan.

Very occasionally, we may ask you to return the next day (day 3) if further images are needed. We will be able to tell you if this is needed on day 2.



After your injection

You should avoid close prolonged contact (more than 30 minutes at one metre) with pregnant women and children under 18 for the next 72 hours. Where possible, pregnant women and/or children should not accompany you to the department.

After your scan

It is very unlikely that you will feel any side-effects after the scan, but if you think that you have please let the medical physics department know. After your scan there will be some radioactivity left in your body. It is important that you continue to keep well hydrated for the next 72 hours and empty your bladder frequently. This will make sure the radioactivity leaves your body as quickly as possible. You may continue all other normal daily activities unless you have been advised otherwise.

Your results

Your scan will be looked at by a specialist doctor, who will issue a report and it will be sent to the doctor who requested your scan.

Contacting us

Nuclear Medicine & Medical Physics Department, Level 1 North Block, Monday to Friday, 9.00 am to 5.00pm. If you have any questions about your treatment, please ask the staff looking after you or telephone 0118 322 7355 or email: rbb-tr.physics@nhs.net

The table below is a simple guide to the levels of radiation risks for various examinations. These are measured in millisieverts (mSv).

Source of exposure (using RBFT local diagnostic reference levels (DRLs) for Nuclear Medicine)	Dose
Having a chest x-ray	0.014 mSv
Taking a transatlantic flight	0.08 mSv
Octreotide (In-111)*	11.9 mSv
UK average annual radiation dose	2.2 mSv
CT scan of the chest – CT scan of whole spine	6.6 mSv – 10 mSv

*Please note that the dose stated is for the radiopharmaceutical injection. The addition of a CT scan as part of the procedure will incur an additional dose: the estimated dose for an average adult CT abdomen is 3.6mSv.

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

RBFT Physics & Clinical Engineering Department, January 2024.
Next review due: January 2026

Compassionate

Aspirational

Resourceful

Excellent