

About Your Thyroid Uptake and Scan

What You Need to Know and Do

The thyroid is a small gland in the lower front of the neck. It produces thyroid hormone, which helps control the body's metabolism.

A thyroid uptake test measures how well the thyroid gland is working.

A thyroid scan (picture) shows the size, shape, and location of the thyroid gland. The scan may help identify a lesion (spot) on the thyroid gland.

What should I do before my appointment?

You may need to stop eating or drinking before the test. You may also need to stop taking your medicine before the test. Talk to us before your test to find out how you need to prepare.

Be sure to tell the radiologist or technologist if you:

- are or think you may be pregnant, or if you are breastfeeding
- are taking any medicines
- have other allergies, especially to iodine, anesthetics, or any medicines
- had a recent nuclear medicine scan or other tests that used iodine, including X-ray or CT tests that used contrast dye
- have other health problems, such as diabetes or kidney problems

- have any current medical illnesses or long-time medical conditions.

When should I arrive for my appointment?

You will need to arrive at least 30 minutes before your appointment time to check in and complete paperwork.

What happens during my test?

The test is done by a nuclear medicine technologist or doctor.

The length of the test will vary.

You will be given a pill to swallow. It contains a substance called radioactive iodine.

After swallowing the pill, you will wait 4 hours for the substance to collect in your thyroid gland.

You will be able to wait in the waiting room, or you may leave and come back.

For the uptake test, you will sit upright. A small device is placed at the front of your neck. The device measures the amount of iodine that has collected in your thyroid.

You will need to wait for 24 hours before the thyroid scan will be given.

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For the thyroid scan, you will lie down on a narrow table. You may be given a tracer. It will be injected in a vein in your arm or your hand. The tracer will have small amounts of radioactivity.

A special camera (gamma camera) is used to take images (pictures) of your neck. Several pictures at different angles will be taken. You will need to lie still during this time.

You will also receive a second Thyroid Uptake test during your second visit (24 hours after your first Thyroid Uptake test).

What happens after my test?

You can usually go back to your normal activities and eat the food you normally eat. The radioactive iodine will pass out of your body in your urine within a few days.

You should call your doctor if you have any of the following:

- rash or hives
- headache
- nausea or vomiting
- chest pain
- trouble breathing.