

St. Luke's Imaging Services Patient/Family Information

Nuclear Medicine Gastric Emptying Scan

What is a Gastric Emptying Scan?

A gastric emptying scan is a painless procedure used to identify abnormalities related to emptying of the stomach. Diseases that involve changes in the way the stomach contracts (motility disorders) are best diagnosed by this test. The patient is given scrambled eggs to eat in which is mixed a radioactive material. Once eaten, the clearing of this food from the stomach is directly observed with a Nuclear Medicine camera. Calculations are made at the completion of the images that will estimate the amount the stomach empties. The amount of radiation your body receives is similar to that received from standard x-rays.

Special Note

Before the exam, please tell your doctor if you are or think you may be pregnant or are nursing.

Preparation

Please bring your medication list with you to your exam.

Before arriving in the Nuclear Medicine area, the patient may not have any food or drink for a minimum of 4 hours before the time of their exam. Nothing to eat or drink after midnight before the exam is preferred.

If this is the only exam you are having, there are no diet or activity restrictions before or after your exam. If other exams are scheduled along with your nuclear medicine gastric emptying scan, you may be asked to follow other instructions. The Nuclear Medicine staff will help you understand all of your instructions.

If you are diabetic, please bring your glucose meter and diabetic medications with you to your scheduled appointment.

What Happens During the Test?

You will be given a meal of two scrambled eggs, two slices of toast and one glass of water.

Once the meal is completed, images will begin immediately and will continue every 30 minutes for two hours and an additional image at 3 hours and 4 hours. Each image takes one minute and you will be asked to lie perfectly still during that time. You will be instructed not to eat or drink during this four hour time frame.

After the Exam

You may go back to your usual diet and activity after the scan. Nuclear gastric emptying scans are safe; complications or side effects are rare. You receive only a tiny amount of radioactive material. It is eliminated or disappears from your body in one to two days.

The results are interpreted by a radiologist who specializes in the analysis of these exams. The results will be sent to your doctor who will discuss them with you.

It is important that you understand your gastric emptying scan. We encourage you to ask any questions of your doctor, nurse or Nuclear Medicine personnel.

When Will I Know the Results?

The radiologist will review and interpret the scan shortly after the exam is completed. A written report will be sent to your doctor. Your doctor will discuss these results with you.

Please allow your physician the time needed to review these results.

Outpatient Instructions

Please register at the Outpatient Registration desk at the West Entrance. After registering, testing will be done in the Imaging Services department on the second floor. Please use the elevators past registration on the left.

Name _____

Exam date/time _____