

UnityPoint Health - Finley Hospital Radiology Patient/Family Information
Nuclear Medicine Thyroid Scan/Uptake

What is a Thyroid Scan?

This scan measures:

1. The function of the thyroid gland
2. The concentration of iodine
3. The production and storage of thyroid hormones
4. Hormone release into the bloodstream as needed

Nuclear Medicine thyroid scanning plays an important role in learning about patient’s thyroid disorders. It can confirm the presence of a nodule (lump) in the thyroid. It also identifies the reason for the nodule and may find multiple nodules.

Special Note

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

Preparation

Please bring your medication list with you.

Below is a list of some common medications that may affect Nuclear Medicine thyroid imaging. Note the time frames. You must stop taking these medications for this period before thyroid scanning can be done.

Thyroid Hormones (Synthroid, desiccated thyroid)	4 weeks
Thyroid Medications (Cytomel, Tapazol, PTU)	1 week
X-ray Contrast	4 weeks
Myelogram	1 week
Salpingography	4 weeks
Amiodarone (cordarone) – with patient’s cardiologist approval	4 weeks
Dietary Supplements (kelp, fish oil, Boost, Ensure)	1 week
Shell Fish	1 week
Multivitamins	1 week
Iodine Products (topical ointments, suppositories)	4 weeks

Please make sure that your doctor knows the medications that you are currently taking, including over the counter medications.

Why is a Thyroid Scan Performed?

A thyroid scan is an imaging technique used to determine thyroid function (called the thyroid uptake) as well as to determine the size and shape of the thyroid.

How Long Does the Procedure Take?

The procedure is done in two parts. Please allow approximately 30 minutes for each part.

How is the Procedure Performed?

At your first visit, you will be given a very small amount of a radioactive material, either in a pill or by IV injection. This material, over time, will outline your thyroid gland so that the test can be done.

Once you swallow the pill, we must wait 4 hours for the radioactive material to be absorbed into your thyroid. You do not have to stay in the hospital during that time. Unless another test is scheduled, you may leave the hospital, go back to normal activities, and return in 4 hours for the actual test. (The Nuclear Medicine technologist will give you a return time.)

For the exam, you will be asked to lie on your back and a specialized gamma camera will be centered over your neck while images of your thyroid are recorded. These images will take approximately 8 to 10 minutes each. In addition, you will sit in a chair briefly while a sensitive instrument scans both your neck and your thigh (thyroid uptake). This will give your doctor important information about your thyroid function. You will need to return in 24 hours for the uptake scan only which will take around 10 minutes.

If you are given an injection, there is a 30 minute wait, then images are taken over the thyroid area. These images will take approximately 30 minutes. The decision to give either the injection, or the capsule is based on your medical history.

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.

Name: _____

Exam Date/Time: _____