

Nuclear Medicine

We know children.

What is Nuclear Medicine?

Nuclear Medicine uses small amounts of radioactive tracers to help diagnose a variety of diseases. Depending on the type of nuclear medicine scan your child is having they could possibly need a catheter and/or IV placement.

What happens during a Nuclear Medicine Scan with an IV?

- A child life specialist can meet with you and your child to help explain the procedure at your child's developmental level, show you pictures of the camera/room the procedure will occur in, and help your child develop a positive coping plan.
- Two adults are allowed to stay with your child. If pregnant, you will be unable to stay in during the pictures but are welcome to remain with your child during the IV and/or catheter placement. If you're planning on bringing other children with you, one adult will need to stay in the waiting area with them.
- You and your child will be taken to a procedure room to have their IV placed by a radiology nurse (RN). In the procedure room there is a bed available for patients to lie down, a chair for comfort holds, and a double chair that allows extra room for a caregiver during IV placements.
- Once you and your child are in a comfortable position the RN will begin the IV placement process.
- See additional resource for how to prepare your child for an IV placement.
- The RN will then take you and your child into the nuclear medicine room where the nuclear medicine technologist will explain the remainder of the exam.
- During the scan, your child will need to hold their body still in order to get clear pictures.

What happens during a Nuclear Medicine Scan with a catheter?

- A child life specialist can meet with you and your child to help explain the procedure at your child's developmental level, show you pictures of the camera/room the procedure will occur in, and help your child develop a positive coping plan.
- Two adults are allowed to stay with your child. If pregnant, you will be unable to stay in during the pictures but are welcome to remain with your child during the IV and/or catheter placement. If you're planning on bringing other children with you, one adult will need to stay in the waiting area with them.
- Your child will need to change into a hospital gown, and the catheter will be placed by a radiology nurse (RN) in the nuclear medicine room.
- Boys will lay flat on their back with straight legs. Girls will lie on their back making butterfly wings with their legs.
- You and your child can decide if lidocaine would be beneficial to help reduce sensation of catheter placement. Lidocaine can be used on children who are 2 years or older and able to lie still while uncovered for 3 minutes to let the lidocaine take effect.
- The RN will clean your child's opening where urine comes out (penis for boys and near the vagina for girls) with a cold, wet soap on a cotton ball three times followed by a dry cotton ball.
- When the catheter is being inserted your child may feel an uncomfortable pinch-like feeling. Deep breathing can help lessen this sensation. Once the catheter is in the correct position your child may feel like they need to go to the bathroom. This is a normal sensation that decreases with relaxation and distraction.
- The RN will place a small piece of tape to keep the catheter in the correct spot for pictures.
- The nuclear medicine technologist will explain the remainder of the exam.
- During the scan, your child will need to hold their body still in order to get clear pictures.

How can you prepare and support your child with their Nuclear Medicine Scan?

- Use developmentally appropriate words to explain to your child what will happen.
- You are welcome to bring a comforting item (ex. blanket or stuffed animal) for the child to have with them during their scan.
- Ask your doctor or nurse what pain management options are available for your child.
- During the procedure provide support by holding their hands, validating their feelings, and engaging your child in distraction such as looking at a book, playing a game, playing with toys, or watching a movie.
- Participate in One Voice, an initiative to promote a calming environment by limiting the amount of voices in the room so your child knows who to focus on (parent or procedural staff professional).
- Practice deep breathing at home by pretending to blow out birthday candles or blowing bubbles.
- Display a calm demeanor, your child picks up on your anxiety and often mirrors it.

Glossary:

Butterfly Wings – making your legs look like butterfly wings by bending your knees and putting the bottoms of your feet together (only for girls during catheter placement)

Catheter – a small, flexible tube that is inserted through the urethra in order to fill the bladder with contrast

Child Life Specialist – a health care professional who can help your child better understand the routine of their scan and help them cope positively during the procedure

Comfort Hold – a support hold by a caregiver

Intravenous Line (IV) – a small straw used to give the body liquids

Lidocaine - a numbing medicine to decrease sensation during catheter placement

Nuclear Medicine Tech – a health care professional who will take your child's pictures

Pain Ease – a topical numbing spray to help decrease pain associated with needles

Radioactive Tracer – used to assess function in a particular part of the body

Radiologist - the doctor taking/reading the pictures from the scan

If you have more questions related to preparing your child for this test you can contact the Radiology Child Life Specialist at 402-955-4042.

