

Nuclear Medicine: Gastric Emptying Scan

What is a Gastric Emptying Scan?

A gastric emptying scan is a test that takes pictures of the stomach. The scan can show how long it takes for food to empty out of the stomach after eating.

How to Prepare for the Test?

You will receive a call from a staff member with directions about what your child needs to do before the scan. You also will need to bring a meal for your child to eat on the day of the scan.

- If you are pregnant, ask the nuclear medicine staff about any safety directions.
- Children are not allowed in the waiting room without an adult. If you will be in the test room with your child, please bring another adult with you to watch your other children.
- Your child should wear comfortable, lightweight clothing on the day of the scan.



What Will Happen During the Test?

A staff member will bring you and your child to the room. You will be able to stay with your child.

- The nuclear medicine technologist will add a radioactive material (tracer) to the food you bring for your child to eat. Our special cameras will take pictures to see where the food goes and how fast it empties out of your child's stomach.
- Your child will have to eat as much of the meal as possible in 10 minutes.
- Your child will lie down on the procedure bed. The nuclear medicine tech will place your child in the right position for the picture and place a safety belt/wrap across your child's body.
- Your child will have to lie completely still for at least 90 minutes.
- A camera will be positioned above your child's body.
- You will be able to sit next to your child during the scan. Your child will be able to watch a movie. (Many movies are available for your child, or you can bring a DVD from home.)
- Once the nuclear medicine tech finishes taking the pictures, your child will be able to go home or the Transport Team will take you back to your inpatient room.

How Can I Help My Child?

Explain to your child what will happen during the test. Use simple words that are familiar to you and your child.

- Be honest with your child about the test.
- Follow any instructions (i.e., about food or liquids) given by the doctor who asked for the test.
- Have your child practice holding still at home before the scan.

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- Bring comforting things that your child enjoys from home, such as a favorite toy, blanket, book, DVD movie, etc.
- Talk or play with your child throughout the exam. For example, play “I Spy,” read books, tell stories, listen to music, or play with toys. Some toys are available in the exam room.
- Praise and support your child during the scan. (Say, “Good job holding still,” and acknowledge his or her feelings.)
- Ask questions. Make sure you have all the information you need to be ready and to best support your child.

If you would like a Child Life Specialist to talk to your child about the test or give support, call 323-361-7675.