

Nuclear medicine department

Information about your octreotide scan

What is an octreotide scan?

This scan is used to detect certain types of tumours arising from the neuro-endocrine systems of the body. This examination is performed over two days.

On the first day we will give you an injection containing a small amount of radioactivity called a tracer. Four hours after this we will take the first set of pictures. You will then need to return on the second day and we will take further more detailed pictures.

What to do on the evening before your first appointment

The evening before your first appointment, please take a dose of gentle laxative, for example senna tablets available from your local pharmacy, and repeat this again on the evening before your second appointment. This ensures that your bowel is clear and helps us get better pictures. It is not necessary to take a laxative if you have diarrhoea.

Is there any preparation for my octreotide scan?

- If you are having any octreotide injections (Lanreotide [Somatuline], Sandostatin or Somatostatin), please contact the nuclear medicine department as soon as you get your scan appointment letter. It may be necessary for you to stop having this medication before the scan, and we will need to discuss this with the doctor looking after you.
- You should continue to take any other medication as usual.
- Please continue to eat and drink normally.
- Please try to leave all jewellery at home, as you will need to remove all metal for the scan. We suggest you wear loose-fitting, comfortable clothes. You will not usually need to change into a hospital gown.
- Please allow plenty of time to get to your appointment, as the tracer is individually ordered for you and scans cannot normally be delayed.
- Please do not bring anyone with you who is pregnant or under 18 years of age.
- You must tell us in advance if you know you are (or think that you may be) pregnant, or are breast feeding, or if you are the main carer for a baby or small child.



What happens during my octreotide scan?

Our staff will explain the procedure to you fully when you arrive for your appointment.

Day 1

- We will give you an injection of a radioactive substance called a tracer into a vein, usually in the arm or hand. It takes a few hours for the tracer to concentrate in the body, so you may leave the hospital.
- **You must attend for the scan later in the day at the time given to you by the technologist.**
- In the time between the injection and the scan we advise you to drink plenty of fluid and empty your bladder regularly, as this helps wash out the excess tracer from your body and also makes the images clearer. You may eat as normal during this time.
- Just before the scan begins you will be asked to empty your bladder.
- We will then ask you to lie on the scan bed. We will make sure you are as comfortable as possible for the scan, as it is extremely important that you remain as still as you can.
- The scan on day 1 lasts about 30 minutes. After this you will be able to leave the hospital.

Day 2

Please attend promptly on day 2 at the time given to you by the technologist.

- On day 2 we only take pictures. There are no further injections.
- Just before the scan you will be asked to empty your bladder.
- We will again ask you to lie on the scan bed. This time the scan will last up to **3 hours**. There will be an opportunity for you to move around a little between pictures and to empty your bladder if necessary.

Will I feel anything during my scan?

The injection feels similar to having blood taken. There are no side effects from the injection, it will not make you feel sleepy or affect your ability to drive.

Having the pictures taken will not hurt, but if you are in a lot of pain or find it difficult to keep still, please tell us.

What happens after my octreotide scan?

Once we have checked the technical quality of your scan and are happy we have all the information we need, you will be able to leave the department.

Continue to drink plenty of fluid for the next 3 days and empty your bladder regularly. This helps wash out the tracer from your body more quickly. You may eat as normal.

A radiologist will send a report of the scan, usually within a week and then the results will be sent to the consultant who referred you. We will not be able to give you any results on the day.

How safe is the examination?

There are small risks associated with the radiation that you will be exposed to for this test. However, the images give the doctors important information about your condition that helps in your treatment. The benefits of the information from the scan outweigh the small risks from the exposure to radiation.

Following your injection and for the rest of the day following your scan, you should try to avoid long periods of close contact with other people. This is to minimise their exposure to a small dose of radiation.

If you are planning to travel abroad within the four weeks following your scan, please let us know this when you attend. This is because there are sensitive radiation detectors in airports and ports as part of increased security. We will give you a letter which will explain clearly about the tracer you have been given, and will prevent any delays to your travel.

What are the benefits of my octreotide scan?

An Octreotide scan allows us to perform two types of scan at the same time, without movement, giving us a more complete picture of your body. It allows us to look at both the structure (what they look like) and function (how they work) of the organs and tissues. It is very detailed and sensitive, so will help the doctors looking after you to monitor your treatment. It also gives them different information from that of a CT or MRI scan.

What happens if I decide not to have the octreotide scan?

If you decide not to have the octreotide scan, then please discuss this with the doctor looking after you.

What happens if I cannot keep my appointment?

If you cannot keep your appointment contact the nuclear medicine department as soon as possible so that we can offer the appointment to someone else and make you a new appointment.

Please attend promptly at the time shown on the attached appointment letter.

If you have any questions about this appointment, or any queries about the examination, please telephone the number below:

Tel: 0161 446 3942/6

If you need information in a different format, such as easy read, large print, BSL, braille, email, SMS text or other communication support, please tell your ward or clinic nurse.

The Christie is committed to producing high quality, evidence based information for patients. Our patient information adheres to the principles and quality statements of the Information Standard. If you would like to have details about the sources used please contact **the-christie.patient.information@nhs.net**

For information and advice visit the cancer information centres at Withington, Oldham or Salford. Opening times can vary, please check before making a special journey.



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urgent support and specialist advice
The Christie Hotline: 0161 446 3658
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