

Nuclear Medicine Department

Information about your GFR test

What is a GFR test?

GFR stands for **G**lomerular **F**iltration **R**ate. This test shows how well your kidneys are working to filter your blood. For this test we will give you an injection containing a small amount of radioactivity (called a radioactive tracer) and we will also take three blood samples from you. This test allows your kidney function to be accurately measured by showing how quickly the radioactive tracer disappears from your blood.

Is there any preparation for my GFR test?

- No special preparation is required for this test.
- Please continue to eat and drink normally, and continue to take your usual medication.
- Please allow plenty of time to get to your appointment, as the tracer is individually ordered for you.
- You should expect the whole test to last for 4 to 5 hours.

For female patients: You must tell us in advance if you know you are (or think that you may be) pregnant, or are breastfeeding.

What happens during my GFR test?

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

- You will be asked to confirm your identity.
- You will have your height and weight taken and be escorted to the room where the test will take place.
- We will put a small needle into a vein in your arm or hand. Firstly we will take a blood sample from you. Immediately following that we will give you the radioactive tracer through the same needle. The needle will then be removed.
- After two hours, we will take a blood sample from another vein, again in your arm or hand.
- After a further two hours we will take a third blood sample. You may leave the department between each part of the procedure.
- You must attend for the blood samples at the times given to you by the technologist.



- **For a successful GFR test you must attend for the blood samples at the times given to you by the technologist.**

If you have a central venous line (either a PICC, Hickman line® or Portacath®) we will be able to take the blood samples from it. It may still be necessary to inject the radioactive tracer into a vein in your arm or hand to start the test when you arrive.

We will not take any pictures for this test. You may have had a blood test in the past; this is very similar.

Will I feel anything during my test?

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.

What happens after my GFR test?

After we have taken the last blood sample, you will be able to leave the department.

Continue to eat and drink as normal.

As the blood samples will be analysed at a later time, we will be unable to tell you the result of the test on the day. The results will be sent to a consultant who referred you.

How safe is the test?

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

Because the amount of radioactive tracer you have been given is very small, it is not necessary for you to avoid contact with other people following your injection.

What are the benefits of my GFR test?

Some chemotherapy drugs can damage the kidneys and reduce their efficiency. This test is an accurate way of monitoring your kidney function. Initially, it allows the doctors looking after you to establish a base line function of your kidneys before treatment with certain drugs. It may then be repeated periodically to monitor the effects of treatment. This test can also be used to monitor the effects of surgery on your kidneys and bladder.

What happens if I decide not to have the GFR test?

If you decide not to have the test, 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.

Your GFR schedule:

1. Arrival at department 31 for the test.
2. First blood sample taken and injection of radioactive tracer given.
3. Second blood sample after 2 hours.
4. Third blood sample taken after another 2 hours.
5. After the third blood sample, the test is complete and you may leave.

If you have any questions about this appointment, or any queries about the examination, please phone 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.

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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.



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