

If there is a chance you could be pregnant, please tell the tech.

Renal Scan

About the Test

A renal scan is an exam that shows the size, shape and function of your kidneys using a radioactive tracer. The amount of radiation used in this test is small and well within limits that are not harmful. The exam is done in the Nuclear Medicine department and lasts about 1 hour.

Before the Test

There is no preparation for the test.

On the day of the test, plan to arrive 15 minutes before your test time. Be sure to bring:

- Your doctor's written order for the test if one was given to you
- Photo ID
- Medical insurance information
- Medicare card (Medicare patients only)

Please come to the 8th floor reception desk in the Galter Pavilion, 201 East Huron Street.

Parking is available for patients and visitors in the garage at 222 East Huron Street, across from the Feinberg and Galter pavilions. For discounted rates, please bring your parking ticket with you. Tickets can be validated at the Customer Services Desks on the 1st, 2nd and 8th floors of the Feinberg and Galter pavilions; 1st floor of Prentice (including the Prentice 24-hour desk near the Superior entrance).

During the Test

When you arrive in the Nuclear Medicine department, a nurse or technologist (tech) will ask you questions about your medical history. *If you think you might be pregnant or are breastfeeding, please tell the tech before you are given any injection.*

The tech will ask you to lie on an imaging table. A radioactive tracer is then injected IV (into the vein). A special camera detects the tracer and takes pictures of your kidneys and bladder for 30 minutes. At the end of this time, the tech will ask you to empty your bladder. Then, you will stand in front of the camera as one more picture of your kidneys and bladder is taken. A doctor will review your renal scan before you leave.

After the Test

You may resume your normal activities and diet. The IV tracer you were given is not harmful and becomes non-radioactive within hours. Talk with your doctor about your test results. You may obtain a copy of your test results about a week after the exam from Medical Records. Medical Records is located on the 2nd floor of the Galter Pavilion.

If you have any questions about this test, please call the Nuclear Medicine department at 312.926.2320, Monday through Friday, 7:30 am to 5 pm.

Northwestern Medicine – Health Information Resources

For more information, contact Northwestern Memorial Hospital's Alberto Culver Health Learning Center (HLC) at hlc@nm.org, or by calling 312.926.5465. You may also visit the HLC on the 3rd floor, Galter Pavilion at 251 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL. Health information professionals can help you find the information you need and provide you with personal support at no charge.

For more information about Northwestern Medicine, please visit our website at nm.org.

Para asistencia en español, por favor llamar al Departamento de Representantes para Pacientes al 312.926.3112.

The entities that come together as Northwestern Medicine are committed to representing the communities we serve, fostering a culture of inclusion, delivering culturally competent care, providing access to treatment and programs in a nondiscriminatory manner and eliminating healthcare disparities. For questions, please call either Northwestern Memorial Hospital's Patient Representatives Department at 312.926.3112, TDD/TTY 312.926.6363 or the Northwestern Medical Group Patient Representatives Department at 312.695.1100, TDD/TTY 312.926.6363.

Developed by: NMH Department of Nuclear Medicine