**Thyroid Scan I–123 Uptake and Scan**

A thyroid uptake and scan study shows how well the thyroid gland is working. By using a small amount of radioactive iodine, the doctor can see how your thyroid gland absorbs iodine. This test can detect if you have an underactive, normal or overactive thyroid. The amount of radiation used in the test is small and well within the limits that are not harmful. The exam is done in the Nuclear Medicine Department over 3 appointments; 2 appointments on the 1st day and the last appointment the next day.

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

**Before the Test**

To obtain accurate test results, it is important that you follow these guidelines.

- You must not receive any iodine contrast material (X-ray, CT or MRI) 6 weeks prior to a thyroid uptake.
- Do not take thyroid medicines 4 to 6 weeks before the test. In general, you should be off Synthroid® (T4) for 4 to 6 weeks, Cytomel® (T3) for 10 to 14 days.
- Follow a low iodine diet and avoid medicines that contain iodine for at least 1 week before your test. (Common foods high in iodine include table salt, seafood and other salt-water fish). Read food and drug labels carefully. If you have any questions about this, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

Do not eat or drink anything 4 hours before your 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.
- A list of allergies.
- A list of all your current medications (prescription, over-the-counter, and herbals).
- 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 may be pregnant or if you are breastfeeding, please tell the tech before the start of the test.

You will be seated in front of a machine that takes a special reading of your thyroid gland and then your thigh (to measure the amount of natural existing radiation in the body). Next you will swallow 1 capsule of a small amount of radioactive iodine (tracer). You will be instructed to return to the Nuclear Medicine Department about 4 to 6 hours later for your 2nd appointment and 24 hours later for your 3rd appointment. The tech will remind you not to eat anything for 2 hours after the taking the radioactive tracer. Do not take any thyroid or iodine containing medicine. Continue on your low iodine diet.

When you return for your 2nd appointment (4 to 6 hours later), a tech will take pictures of your thyroid gland using a gamma camera. The tech will assist you to lie on your back on an imaging table, under the camera. The camera will be close to your neck as 2 to 4 pictures of your thyroid are taken. It is very important to lie still during this procedure. A doctor will review your pictures. In some cases, extra images are taken to obtain more detailed information. Once the needed images are taken, this part of the test is complete.

As instructed for the 3rd appointment (the next day), please return to the Nuclear Medicine Department. Again while seated in front of the same machine, your thyroid and thigh are surveyed and the amount of iodine tracer is measured.

After the Test
You may resume your normal activities, diet and medicines after the 2nd and 3rd appointments or as directed by your doctor. The tracer you were given is not harmful and becomes non-radioactive within a few days. The test results will be sent to your doctor within 5 days of the exam.

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 5:00 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, the Northwestern Lake Forest Patient Relations manager at 847.535.8282 and/or the Northwestern Medical Group Patient Representatives Department at 312.695.1100, TDD/TTY 312.926.6363.

Developed by: NMH Department of Nuclear Medicine

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