

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

## Thyroid I-123 Uptake and Scan

A thyroid uptake and scan is a test that shows how well your thyroid gland is working. By using a small amount of radioactive iodine (I-123) tracer, the physician can see how your thyroid gland absorbs iodine. This test can determine 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 to you. The test is done in the Nuclear Medicine Department over 3 appointments. You will have 2 appointments on the 1st day and the last appointment the next day.

### Before the test

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

- You must **not** have received any iodine contrast material during tests such as an X-ray, computed tomography (CT) scan or magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) for 6 weeks before your thyroid uptake and scan.
- Do **not** take thyroid medicines 4 to 6 weeks before the test. For example, you should be off levothyroxine (Synthroid®) for 4 to 6 weeks and/or liothyronine (Cytomel®) for 10 to 14 days.
- Follow a low-iodine diet and avoid medications that contain iodine for at least 1 week before your test. (Common foods high in iodine include table salt, seafood and salt-water fish). Read food and medication labels carefully. If you have any questions, ask your physician 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 is scheduled to begin.

Be sure to bring:

- Your physician's written order for the test if you received one
- A list of your allergies
- A list of all your current medications (prescription, over-the-counter and herbal)
- Photo ID
- Medical insurance information
- Medicare card (Medicare patients only)

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

Parking is available for patients and visitors in the garage at 222 East Huron Street, across from Feinberg and Galter pavilions. For a discounted rate, please bring your parking ticket with you. Your ticket can be validated at the Customer Services Desks on the 1st, 2nd and 8th floors of Feinberg and Galter pavilions, and the 1st floor of Prentice Women's Hospital.

## 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 will take a special reading of your thyroid gland and then your thigh. This is to measure the amount of natural existing radiation in your 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 taking the radioactive tracer. Do not take any thyroid or iodine-containing medication. 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 help you lie on your back on an imaging table under the camera. The camera will be close to your neck. The tech will take 2 to 4 pictures of your thyroid. It is very important to lie still during this procedure. A physician will review your pictures. In some cases, extra images may be taken to obtain more detailed information. Once the needed images are taken, this part of the test will be finished.

For the 3rd appointment (the next day), please return to the Nuclear Medicine Department. While you are seated in front of the same machine, your thyroid and thigh will be scanned, and the amount of iodine tracer will be measured.

## After the test

You may resume your normal activities, diet and medications after the 3rd appointment unless directed otherwise by your physician. The tracer you were given is not harmful and will become nonradioactive within a few days.

Talk with your physician about your test results. You may obtain a copy of your test results about a week after the test from the Medical Records Department, which is located on the 2nd floor of Galter Pavilion.

If you have any questions about this test, please call the Nuclear Medicine Department at 312.926.2320 (TTY: 711), Monday through Friday, 7:30 am to 5:00 pm.