What is a Parathyroid scan?

The parathyroid scan is a nuclear medicine procedure that uses a radiopharmaceutical known as 99mTc-Sestamibi to determine the presence and location of a hyperfunctioning parathyroid gland. This scan can assist your physician in determining various disease states of the parathyroid glands and can also help guide in the surgical removal of the overactive gland if determined appropriate. The absorption of the 99mTc-sestamibi is related to the increased blood flow and retention properties of the overactive parathyroid gland cells. Successful detection of a hyperfunctioning gland is also related to it’s size and position within the neck or chest. Special SPECT images are taken of your neck at approximately 10 minutes and 2 1/2 hours following the 99mTc-Sestamibi injection. These images allow us to look at the neck and chest in a 3-dimensional rendering similar to that of a CT scan.

How Should I prepare for it?

Wear comfortable clothing for this test. There are no specific food or liquid restrictions prior to this test.

How Can I expect During the Test?

These glands regulate the calcium level in your blood. When one or more of these glands becomes hyper-functioning, it can lead to abnormally high levels of serum calcium. This is known as Primary Hyperparathyroidism and can result in serious consequences such as osteoporosis if left untreated. The most common form of treatment is surgical removal of the individual or multiple over-active glands.
What Can I Expect During the Test?

The parathyroid scan is a two part dual scan procedure; Check in at the facility at your scheduled time. Please have your insurance card(s) with you as well as the requisition form from your doctor.

You will then meet with the technologist. He will explain the procedure to you and will administer a tiny injection of 99mTc-Sestamibi. You will lie down on a narrow imaging table and a nuclear camera device will be placed over your neck and head. Scans will be taken for approximately 30 minutes.

Scan 2: You must return in approximately 2 - 2 1/2 hours later for additional scans of your neck which will last approximately 30 minutes.

A written report will be sent to your physician upon completion of the test. Your doctor will then explain the results to you.

****** A PREGNANCY TEST ******

IS REQUIRED PRIOR TO THIS TEST FOR ANY FEMALE OF CHILD BEARING AGE UNLESS YOU HAVE HAD TUBAL LIGATION OR HYSTERECTOMY. FOR ANY OTHER REASONING, PLEASE CALL OUR TECHNOLOGISTS FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.

IF REQUIRED, IT SHOULD BE PERFORMED THE DAY BEFORE YOUR APPOINTMENT WITH RESULTS IN OUR OFFICE THE DAY PRIOR TO YOUR APPOINTMENT.

Answers to Common Questions

How Long Will the Test Last?

Allow 45 to 60 minutes when you arrive to meet with the technologist and perform the initial scans of your neck. Approximately 2 hours later, repeat images of your neck will be taken. This portion will last approximately 30 minutes.

Are there any side effects from the 99mTc-Sestamibi injection?

No. You will not feel a thing at any time during the test. The injection is performed in an arm vein.

I’m claustrophobic, will I be totally enclosed in the machine?

No. The camera will come very close to your face and neck, but the sides are completely open. Most patient’s that are claustrophobic have no problem having the scan.

Do I Have to Stop Any of My Medications or are there any food or liquid restrictions prior to taking this test?

No.