

Gastric Intestinal Bleed Scan

How to prepare and what to expect

This handout explains a gastric intestinal bleed scan. It includes how to prepare for the scan, how it works, how it is done, what you may feel during the scan, and how to get your results.

What is a gastric intestinal bleed scan?

A *gastric intestinal (GI) bleed scan* is a nuclear medicine scan. It uses a radioactive *tracer* to help your doctors find where the bleeding is coming from in your stomach or intestine. The scan is a form of radiology, because radiation is used to take pictures of your body.

How does the scan work?

We will take a small sample of your blood. We will add a radioactive *tracer* to the sample and then inject it back into you. As this radioactive blood moves through your body, it will give off gamma rays.

A gamma camera will detect the gamma rays and create pictures of the inside of your body. These pictures will show where the bleeding is happening.

How do I prepare?

- You do not need to do anything special to prepare.
- Tell the scheduler if you have a *heparin allergy* or *heparin-induced thrombocytopenia (HIT)*.
- Please tell your doctor or technologist if you are breastfeeding, or if there is any chance you may be pregnant.



A gamma camera will create pictures of the inside of your body.

How is the scan done?

- The technologist will place a thin tube called an *intravenous* (IV) line into a vein in your arm. The technologist will draw a blood sample through this line.
- The technologist will inject the tracer into this blood sample. It will make your blood slightly radioactive. This takes 20 minutes.
- The technologist then will inject the blood back into your body through your IV line.
- The gamma camera detects the gamma rays given off by the tracer. A computer uses these gamma rays to create pictures of the inside of your body.

What can I expect?

- During this scan, you will lie flat on your back. The gamma camera will take pictures over your abdomen.
- The technologist will help make you comfortable.
- You must not move during the time the camera is taking pictures. If you move, the pictures will be blurry and may have to be repeated.
- The imaging will take 1 to 2 hours.
- After the scan, most of the radioactivity will pass out of your body in your urine or stool. The rest simply goes away over time.

What will I feel during the scan?

- Lying still on the exam table may be hard for some patients.
- You may feel some minor discomfort from the IV.

Who interprets the results and how do I get them?

A nuclear medicine doctor will review your images, write a report, and talk with your provider about the results. Your own provider will talk with you about the results of your scan.

You may also read your results on your eCare Results page. If you need copies of your images on disc, call 206.598.6206.

You and your provider will decide the next step, such as treatment for a problem, as needed.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

- UWMC Imaging Services: 206.598.6200
- Harborview Imaging Services: 206.744.3105