

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, 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 done to help your doctors find where the bleeding is coming from in your stomach or intestine. It is a nuclear medicine exam that uses a radioactive *tracer* to detect and treat disease. It 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 tracer to the sample and then inject it back into you. As the radioactive blood moves through your body, it will give off *gamma rays*.

A *gamma camera* will detect the gamma rays and send data to a computer. The computer will create pictures of the inside of your body. These pictures will show where the bleeding is happening.



A gamma camera

How do I prepare?

- *Women:* Tell your provider if you are pregnant or breastfeeding.
- Tell the scheduler if you have a *heparin allergy* or *heparin-induced thrombocytopenia (HIT)*.

On Scan Day

If You Are a Woman of Childbearing Age

Before the tracer is injected:

- Tell the technologist if there is **any** chance you may be pregnant.

- We will ask if you are breastfeeding.
- We will again confirm that there is no chance you are pregnant.

What to Expect

- During the first 20 minutes, the technologist will:
 - Place a tube called an *intravenous* (IV) line into a vein in your arm
 - Draw a blood sample through this IV
 - Inject the radioactive tracer into this blood sample
- The technologist then will inject the blood back into your body through your IV line.
- The gamma camera will then detect the gamma rays given off by the tracer.
- The imaging will take 1 to 2 hours.

What will I feel during the scan?

- During this scan, you will lie flat on your back. The gamma camera will take pictures over your belly.
- The technologist will help make you comfortable.
- You must not move while the camera is taking pictures. If you move, the pictures will be blurry and may need to be taken again.

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.

Questions?

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

- ☐ UWMC Nuclear
Medicine/Imaging Services:
206.598.6200
- ☐ Harborview Imaging
Services: 206.774.3105
- ☐ UWMC - Northwest Imaging
Services: 206.598.4240

What happens to the tracer?

Drink plenty of water during the first 24 hours after your scan to help your body get rid of the tracer. Most of the radioactivity will leave your body in your urine or stool. The rest simply goes away over time.

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 MyChart 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.