How long will the test take?
Up to 1½ hours.

What happens after the test?
- You are free to go home or return to your ward.
- A nuclear medicine doctor will report on your images, often on the same day. This report is then sent to the doctor who requested the test. This doctor should inform you or your GP of the result. Please make sure the doctor who referred you tells you the result of every test you have.

 travellers abroad?
Please be aware that most airports have sensitive radiation monitors which detect very small amounts of radiation and may detect a residue trace from your test. We advise you keep, and travel with, your appointment letter if you are travelling within the next few days.

How to find/ contact the department:
The nuclear medicine department is located on level 3, in the outpatient end of the hospital. If you have any queries or cannot make your appointment please contact the department as soon as possible on 01223 217145.

Other formats:
If you would like this information in another language, large print or audio, please ask the department where you are being treated, to contact the patient information team: patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk.
Please note: We do not currently hold many leaflets in other languages; written translation requests are funded and agreed by the department who has authored the leaflet.

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What is this leaflet about?
This leaflet is to help explain your scan and provide you with some general information. We are happy to provide additional information; our contact details are on the back of this leaflet.

Benefits of nuclear medicine tests
Nuclear medicine procedures are very safe. Your doctor will discuss the proposed scan with you, and will consider the benefits of having or not having the investigation, before sending us your referral form.

What is ‘nuclear medicine’?
Nuclear medicine refers to the medical use of radioactive substances for the diagnosis, and sometimes treatment, of medical conditions.

What diseases are investigated in a nuclear medicine department?
Nuclear medicine tests are helpful to diagnose a wide variety of illnesses. The clinician that referred you to nuclear medicine will have already explained to you why and how the test is being performed and for what reason.

Will it hurt?
No more than a blood test. It will not make you drowsy or prevent you from driving.

Are nuclear medicine tests dangerous?
No. You will receive some radiation which is comparable to some x-rays. The clinician that referred you will have explained the test to you. We will, however, be happy to discuss this further when you attend if you wish.

What if I am pregnant or breastfeeding?
It is usual to avoid radioactive tests during pregnancy. Patients who know, or suspect, that they are pregnant should contact the department before attending and tell the doctor or nurse before the start of the test.
Small amounts of some radioactive substances may appear in breast milk. Mothers who are breastfeeding should contact the department before attending and tell the doctor or nurse before the test.

What is an iodine 123 thyroid scan?
The test shows how well the thyroid gland is functioning.

Do I need to prepare for the test?
- YES. Do not eat seafood or take any fish oil capsules, kelp/seaweed supplements or multi vitamins containing iodine for one week prior to the test.
- You will need to fast for four hours before your test and have no liquid for one hour before your test.
- If you are diabetic please bring your medication with you.
- Please tell the nurse/doctor in the department if you have received any x-ray contrast material or if you are taking any medication for your thyroid.
- Avoid clothes with metal buttons. You may be asked to remove metal objects (buckles, coins, jewellery) while the pictures are being taken.

How is the test carried out?
- You will be given a drink containing a small amount of radioactive material.
- After your drink there will be a delay of three to four hours, after which the main set of pictures are taken.
- You will be able to leave the department following the drink, returning for your pictures. You will be given a return time before you receive your drink.
- Occasionally we may need to take an additional CT (computed tomography) x-ray but we will not be able to confirm this until after your initial images.
- Sometimes it is necessary to take more pictures the next morning. You will be advised if this is needed.
- The pictures are usually taken with you lying on a bed. You will not be going into a ‘tunnel’, but you will need to lie still for up to 30 minutes.
- We can usually take your pictures without removing clothing.