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.

We are now a smoke-free site: smoking will not be allowed anywhere on the hospital site. For advice and support in quitting, contact your GP or the free NHS stop smoking helpline on 0800 169 0 169.

Travelling 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.

What happens after the test?
- You are free to go home or back 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.

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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.

How is the test carried out?
- You will be given two small injections into a vein in the arm, rather like having a blood sample taken.
- There will be an interval of 30 minutes between injections.
- After the second injection you will have some pictures taken.
- The pictures will take one hour continually. There may be more pictures after this at certain intervals, which may continue for the rest of the day.
- 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 one hour.
- We can usually take your pictures without removing clothing.

How long will the test take?
The test can take up to seven hours.

What is a GI bleed scan?
This test confirms and localises any bleeding in the abdomen.

Do I need to prepare for the test?
No. You may eat and drink normally before the test, and continue taking any medication.

Avoid clothes with metal buttons. You may be asked to remove metal objects (buckles, coins, jewellery) while the pictures are being taken.