

# Nuclear medicine

## DMSA renal scan

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### What is a DMSA renal scan?

A DMSA renal scan uses a special camera to take pictures of your child's kidneys.

### What happens before the test?

The nuclear medicine technologist (a person trained in taking these special pictures) will take you and your child into an exam room.

- Before the test begins, a member of the care team will:
  - Start a small I.V. (a needle put into a vein) in your child's hand, arm or foot.
  - Give your child a special medicine, called a radiopharmaceutical (tiny amounts of a radioactive liquid), through the I.V.
- Most often, they cannot take pictures until 2 hours after your child gets the medicine. The technologist will tell you when to come back for the test.

### What happens during the test?

- When it is time for the test, your child will lie down on their stomach on a special table with a safety belt over them. The nuclear medicine camera is over the table and comes close but does not touch your child.
- Your child needs to lie very still for the test. The test takes about 1 hour to complete but may take longer based on your child's needs. Your child may be able to watch a video or TV during the test.
- If your child cannot hold still, the care team may need to give medicine to help make them calm and sleepy for the test. They will also give you eating and drinking instructions if needed.

**NOTE:** One parent may stay with your child during the test. Pregnant mothers, brothers and sisters are not allowed in the exam room.

### Are there any risks?

- Radiation in general is a risk; however, the amount of radiation used is the smallest amount possible to get the best pictures.
- The amount of radiopharmaceutical used is so small that **there is** no great risk. The dose **your child gets** is based on your child's size and weight.

### What happens after the test?

- The technologist will give you any special instructions and let you know when your child can leave.
- After the test, your child may eat as usual, unless your child's doctor tells you not to feed him.

**In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.**

# Nuclear medicine DMSA renal scan, continued

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## When do I get the results?

- A pediatric radiologist, a doctor specially trained in children's X-rays, looks at the pictures and then sends a report to and may talk with your child's doctor.
- If there is a serious problem that requires treatment, your child's doctor will be notified before you leave the Radiology department.
- Call your child's doctor if you have not heard any test results after 3 days.

## How should I prepare my child?

### Babies

Although you cannot explain the test to your baby, you can help them feel more secure during the test if you:

- Bring a special blanket, toy or pacifier.
- Comfort them with your presence and voice.
- You may also bring a bottle of juice or formula to give them **after** the test.

### Toddlers and preschoolers

Young children can get anxious about having a test, so the best time to talk with your child is right before the test.

- On the day of the test, tell your child they will be getting some pictures taken, so his doctor can help them feel better.
- Use simple words. Be honest with your child.
- Let your child know that you will stay with them as much as possible during the test.
- Bring a favorite book, toy or blanket.
- You may also bring a snack to give them **after** the test.

### School-age children

School-age children have good imaginations and may scare themselves by imagining something much worse than the actual test.

- One or 2 days before the test, tell your child they will be going to the hospital to get some pictures taken of their body.
- Use simple words. Be honest with your child. Explain exactly what will happen.
- Let your child know that you will stay with them as much as possible during the test.
- Bring a favorite video, book, toy or game.
- You may also bring a snack to give them **after** the test.

**Please note: If there is a chance your child may be pregnant, tell us before the test, so we can contact her doctor to see if the test still needs to be done.**

**This teaching sheet contains general information only. Talk with your child's doctor or a member of your child's healthcare team about specific care of your child.**

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