

Glomerular Filtration Rate (GFR) Test

Information for patients



What is a GFR test?

GFR stands for Glomerular Filtration Rate, and is a measure of how well the kidneys are working. GFR is measured by seeing how quickly a radioactive tracer is removed from your blood by your kidneys.

Before your visit

Please inform the department **as soon as possible**, using the number found at the top of your letter, if:

- You cannot attend your appointment
- You are **pregnant** or **breastfeeding**

Before your GFR test:

- After **10pm the night before the test**:
 - Avoid caffeinated drinks including tea, coffee, energy drinks and coke
 - Avoid high protein meals (such as meat and dairy)
 - And avoid excessive physical activity (e.g. running, biking, lifting weights).
- On the day of the test:
 - Have a light breakfast
 - Ensure you are adequately hydrated by drinking water.
- On the day of the test, continue to avoid the following until the test is over:
 - Avoid caffeinated drinks including tea, coffee, energy drinks and coke
 - Avoid high protein meals (such as meat and dairy)
 - And avoid excessive physical activity (e.g. running, biking, lifting weights).

During your visit

Our staff will explain the test to you when you arrive for your appointment. For this kidney test we will put a small cannula (a small plastic tube) into a vein in your arm or hand. Following this, a needle will be used to give you an injection of a small amount of radioactive tracer in the opposite arm or hand. Blood samples will be taken from the cannula at 1 hour, 2 hours and 3 hours after the injection. **You must return to the department at the times given to you by the radiographer to have these blood samples taken.** During this time, please stay hydrated by drinking water, avoid intense physical activity and avoid high protein meals (such as meat and dairy).

Risks of the test

This test involves an injection of a radioactive tracer. However, the radiation dose you will receive from this test is very low and is similar to what you would receive on a transatlantic flight. The risk due to exposure to radiation is outweighed by the information that will be gained by the test. A doctor will have authorised the request to make sure this is the best test for you.

After your test

It is very unlikely that you will feel any side-effects after the test, but if you think that you have any side-effects, please let the department know. This test will **not** make you feel sleepy or affect your ability to drive.

Travelling abroad

It is perfectly safe for you to travel abroad after your scan, but many airports and seaports are now equipped with very sensitive radiation detectors. It is possible that the very small amount of radioactivity left in your body could set off a detector as you pass through security. If you intend to travel abroad within a week following your scan, it could be helpful to take with you something to explain that you have recently had a nuclear medicine scan, such as your appointment letter.

Your results

The result of your GFR test will be sent to the doctor who requested the GFR test.

References

British Nuclear Medicine Society. (2022). GFR Test Patient Information bnms.org.uk/page/GFRTTest

