

Patient information

Parathyroid scintigraphy

Dear patient

On behalf of the Director of our Nuclear Medicine Service and the Management of University Hospital Zurich we cordially welcome you. We expect you for an outpatient examination.

For administrative purposes, please bring along your insurance certificate and show it to our receptionists.

What is a parathyroid scintigraphy

A parathyroid scintigraphy is indicated in several disease states. Usually the patient suffers from an excessive production of parathyroid hormone.

The four parathyroid glands are located adjacent to the thyroid in your neck and are minute. They are the source of parathyroid hormone, which is implicated in bone metabolism. There can also be five or six parathyroid glands and all glands can be found in non-standard locations. For treatment, one needs to localize the glands exactly. This is achieved by scintigraphy, but also other methods such as ultrasonography, which frequently is also performed.

Thus, parathyroid scans are used to localize:

- enlarged or supernumerary parathyroid glands
- parathyroid glands in aberrant locations

Prior to the examination

Please do not ingest any food prior to the examination. After midnight, you should not eat anything anymore and should not drink fat containing liquids. Drinking water or coffee/tea without milk is permitted.

Please take your medications as prescribed.

When arriving at the hospital, please present yourself to the reception desk of Nuclear medicine located on the left right after entering through the main entrance of the hospital.

Examination proper

The examination is a nuclear medicine scan. First, you receive some water containing radioactive iodine in minute quantities. Two hours later another substance is injected into an arm vein, which is also slightly radioactive. A few minutes later several

scans of your neck are taken, lasting approximately one hour. Using computers, digital images are obtained, on which enlarged, supernumerary or displaced parathyroid glands can be localized. During the scans, you need to lay still on the examination table, while the camera heads are rotating slowly around you. If you suffer from claustrophobia, we suggest that you bring an accompanying person, who is allowed to sit next to you during the entire examination. Children and young adults are excluded.

Total examination is about 4 hours. After the exam you may eat and drink normally and no other precautions are necessary.

Which side effects can be experienced?

The substances given are very well tolerated. There are no side effects known from literature and in our experience. The dose of ionizing radiation given is very small and comparable to a standard X-ray.

The evaluation of your examination takes some time. Hence, we cannot give you any results right after the examination. We will transmit the results and the images taken to the referring physician as soon as they are ready.

Please note:

If you are unable to keep your appointment, you have to let us know by phone no later than noon of the day preceding the examination. Else we have to bill you for the cost of the examination.

Phone: +41 44 255 35 55

Parking space around the University Hospital is very limited and maximum parking time is two hours. We kindly ask you to use public transportation, whenever possible.