Nuclear Medicine Renal Scans
Renal Flow Scan
Diuretic (Lasix) Renal Scan
Captopril Renal Scan

Test date____________________ Test time________________

This test will be done at UW Health – University Hospital in the Nuclear Medicine section of Radiology. From the clinic entrance, go right in the lobby on Main Street to Atrium Way and follow this to the atrium elevators, then up to the 3rd floor. Follow the signs to Radiology.

What is a Renal Scan?

A Renal Scan is a test that studies blood flow to the kidneys, and the kidney’s ability to make urine (function). It can also look for blockages of the ureters, which are the pathway connecting the kidneys to the bladder. The purpose of this test is to look for signs of poor blood flow, poor function and/or blockages that prevent urine from getting to the bladder.

You will be asked to empty your bladder right before the study. Next, the technologist assisting with your scan will help you lie down on an imaging table, and an IV will be placed. When the scan begins, you will be injected with a small amount of a radioactive substance, through the IV while you are lying on the table. We ask that you hold still and breathe normally during imaging. Allergic reactions are rare. The nuclear medicine camera will take pictures of the radioactive substance as it moves through the kidneys, into your bladder.

About 30 minutes after the scan starts, the Nuclear Medicine doctor will look at your pictures to see if a diuretic should be given to assess any possible blockage to your bladder. The diuretic is injected slowly through your IV and the pictures will continue for an additional 20 minutes. The diuretic will cause your bladder to fill more rapidly and increases your need to void. You will then be asked to void and collect urine for a measurement of volume. An additional 5-10 minutes of pictures will be taken after voiding. Please plan on the entire test taking between 1.5-2 hours.

*Note: Depending on your medical history, you may need to have a urinary catheter inserted before the beginning of the scan.

Sometimes this scan is used to assess the kidneys’ impact on your blood pressure. When this is the reason for the scan, the scan is done twice. First the scan is performed as described above. Then, a blood pressure
medicine called, Captopril, is given. About one hour later the second scan is done as described above. Your blood pressure will be taken several times during this one-hour delay and during the second scan.

**How do I prepare for this test?**

Please tell your doctor if you are pregnant. This test should not be done if you are pregnant or breast-feeding except under special circumstances. You will need to drink 2 eight-ounce glasses of water or juice throughout the 2 hours before the test.

**How will I feel after the test?**

The test is painless, except for the minor discomfort of having an IV placed. The diuretic can give you an urgent need to go to the bathroom. The longer we can take pictures before you need to use the bathroom the better.

**What are the risks?**

Many people worry when they hear that the substance used in this test is radioactive. The amount used in this test is so small that there should be no side effects. You should notify your physician if you are pregnant or breast-feeding before scheduling this test.

**Questions?**

If you have any questions before the test, please call:

UW Health – University Hospital Radiology: Monday-Friday 0800-4:30, (608) 263-9729.

Toll free – 1-800-323-8942; ask for Radiology. 

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person’s health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright ©6/2017. University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#7240.