

## Patient information leaflet

### SeHCAT scan

Radiology department

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#### Introduction

We hope this guide will answer your questions about your SeHCAT Scan.

Please contact the team if you require further information via the details at the end of this leaflet.

#### What is a SeHCAT scan?

A SeHCAT (pronounced 'see cat') scan looks at how well your body absorbs bile salts. Bile salt is produced in the liver and stored in the gallbladder. It helps to digest fats and get rid of toxins in the body.

If the bile salts are not being absorbed properly, they interfere with how the bowel absorbs water and can cause diarrhoea. This is called bile acid malabsorption (BAM). You might be referred for this test if you've had recurring diarrhoea for a long time.

This scan will measure the amount of radioactivity in your body after you've swallowed a capsule. The capsule contains a chemical like bile salt, and a small amount of radioactive tracer (a radioactive solution often known as radiotracer or radioactive isotope). This helps us to diagnose and treat BAM. If you're diagnosed with BAM, we can improve your symptoms dramatically with simple treatment.

#### Why do I need a SeHCAT Scan?

You are having this examination as it will help your doctor to decide on the cause of your symptoms. This procedure will give clearer information to the clinicians treating you.

#### What are the associated risks?

The amount of radioactive tracer used to take the pictures is very small and the radioactivity is short lived. The risk is outweighed by the benefit from the information that is gained by taking the scan. A doctor will have checked the request to make sure this is the optimal test before we contact you.

This procedure involves receiving a dose of a radioactive tracer, this does not have any known side effects and does not make you feel drowsy.

#### Pregnancy

If you are pregnant, think you may be pregnant, or are breastfeeding, please tell the radiographer **before** your appointment date, as we may need to postpone the scan or give special instructions with regard to breastfeeding.

#### Preparing for your procedure (Including medication)

We will call you before your appointment to check your current medication and if you have had a recent Colonoscopy procedure.

It's very important to tell us about any medicines that you're taking. This is because some

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medicines will need to be stopped before the study as they interfere with the test results. We may not be able to do the study if you have not told us about your medicines.

**Please do not have anything to eat or drink for 2 hours before your first appointment.**

**This is to allow efficient absorption of the capsule.**

**Please note you'll have two appointments in the nuclear medicine department, (a week apart) for this procedure.**

### Getting to us

The Princess Alexandra Hospital (Hamstel Road, Harlow, Essex, CM20 1QX), follow the signage to the radiology reception, which is located on the ground floor, green zone. Please let the receptionists know that you have arrived for your appointment.

### When should I arrive?

Please arrive in the radiology department at the time arranged with the nuclear medicine department when booking your appointment.

You may receive an appointment letter in the post and this may be followed up with a text confirmation.

### Can someone stay with me in the hospital?

You are able to have a friend or relative attend with you, as long as they are not young children or pregnant; however, due to ionising radiation regulations, only patients are allowed in the scanning room.

(If the child is the patient then obviously parents may accompany them for their scan).

**Children are not allowed in the waiting area unattended.** Our staff are not permitted to supervise children, so please ensure child care arrangements are in place to avoid your tests being rescheduled.

### The day of the procedure

A member of the nuclear medicine team will collect you from the waiting area and bring you into our preparation room, where they will explain the procedure to you and answer any questions you may have.

### The procedure is over two appointments, one week apart

#### First appointment

When you arrive for your first appointment, you are given a capsule to swallow. This contains a synthetic bile salt with a small amount of radioactive tracer called selenium. This capsule contains a very small amount of gamma radiation.

After taking this capsule you should not feel sick or drowsy throughout this whole procedure.

You will then be free to leave the department for approximately **30 minutes**. This is to allow the tracer to be absorbed by your body. Before you leave you will be given a time to return to the department.

We use a scanner called a gamma camera. You will be asked to lie down and stay as still as possible on the scanning table. There is no need to undress but we will ask you to remove any metal objects from your clothing or pockets such as coins, belts watches, and jewellery. Metallic objects can block the camera detecting radioactivity. **The scan will take 2 minutes.**

The gamma camera will not come close to you and will not touch you.

We take a set of pictures and analyse them using a computer programme to measure the radioactivity.

### **Second appointment (One week later)**

When you return to the department the following week this will only involve the same set of pictures that was taken the week before.

### **After the procedure**

You can eat, drink as normal and go where you wish. Please avoid close contact with children and pregnant women for the rest of the day. Close contact means having a child sit next to you for more than half an hour. This is to avoid exposing children to unnecessary radiation.

Please continue drinking more than usual to help clear the radiation from your body.

### **Can I drive after my procedure?**

You are able to drive as soon as you are discharged from the department.

### **How soon can I return to work?**

It is advisable to return to work the following day after your scan. However, if you wish to discuss this further, please contact the department using the telephone number at the end of this leaflet.

### **When will I get my results?**

You will not know the results of your examination immediately. The radiologist will report their findings to the doctor who arranged your procedure, who will discuss the results with you. It usually takes a couple of weeks for the results to become available.

### **Contacting the team**

If you have any further questions, please contact the nuclear medicine team on; **01279 827120**, from **Monday to Friday, 8am to 4pm**.

There is an answerphone available outside of these hours. Please leave a message and a member of the team will contact you.

### **Your feedback matters**

If you would like to give feedback on your care, please contact our patient experience team at [paht.pals@nhs.net](mailto:paht.pals@nhs.net) or **01279 827211**.

Please contact the communications team at [paht.communications@nhs.net](mailto:paht.communications@nhs.net) if you would like this leaflet in another language or format.