



## Royal Hospital Nuclear Medicine Department

### Nuclear Medicine and Breastfeeding

#### Patient Information Sheet

##### How Nuclear Medicine works?

Nuclear Medicine exams can help to assess how well your organs are working. Hence, it is different from other areas of radiology, which create images of the body anatomy.

During a nuclear medicine procedure, you will receive an injection of a radioactive material called a radiopharmaceutical. When the radiopharmaceutical reaches the right area, a special machine called a gamma camera will take pictures of the area of interest.

##### Nuclear medicine and breastfeeding

There is no need to stop breastfeeding after most nuclear medicine tests because the radioactive tracer will not get into your breast milk. However, the tracers used in some tests do get into your breast milk. Depending on the procedure you are having, you may have to stop breastfeeding for a while because we don't want the baby to swallow the tracer.

The technologist will talk to you about this before giving you the radioactive tracer. He or she will tell you if you must stop breastfeeding your baby, and if so, for how long. If the technologist tells you that must stop breastfeeding for a while, you will need to agree to do so before the test is done.

##### Instructions for mothers who need to stop breastfeeding:

1. Feed your baby normally just before the start of the test.
2. After the test, express all the milk from both breasts at the times you usually feed your baby. Do this until you have been told you are allowed to start breastfeeding your baby again.
3. Throw away the expressed milk. Do not give it to your baby.

4. After the length of time you have been told to stop breastfeeding is over, you can go back to breastfeeding normally again.

##### What you should feed your baby instead

- If you can, express milk before the start of the test and save it in the fridge to feed your baby during the time you have been told not to breastfeed.
- You can use formula milk instead of breast milk.
- If you only have to miss one feeding, you can give your baby boiled water that has been cooled down again.

##### Radiation exposure to the baby

- Your baby will get a small amount of radiation exposure just by being held by you until the radioactive tracer leaves your body.-If possible, do not hold your baby closely for long periods of time during the first six hours after your nuclear medicine test.
- If you have any questions, please speak with the nuclear medicine technologist or your doctor before processing with the test. You might be asked to sign a consent form to give us permission to do the test.



**For your Nuclear Medicine Test,  
The radioactive tracer you will be given is called \_\_\_\_\_**

- You do not have to stop breastfeeding your baby after your Nuclear Medicine test.
- You should stop breastfeeding your baby for \_\_\_\_\_ after your Nuclear Medicine test.

**Technologist:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_