



## Nuclear Medicine

Nuclear Medicine is a medical specialty that uses trace amounts of a radioactive compound to show the function and structure of specific body organs, bones, or tissues to aid in the diagnosis or treatment of disease.

The radioactive compound, known as a tracer, contains atoms that emit energy, which is attracted to certain type of molecules. A different type of tracer is used to attract different types of tissues, such as bones, organs, glands, and blood vessels. Once enough tracers have accumulated in the area that is to be examined, then a gamma camera measures the intensity of radiation in what is called a “count.” Once enough counts have been obtained, a valuable image is generated.

**For more information or to schedule an appointment, please contact the Diagnostic Imaging Department at 715-939-1594.**



### Nuclear Medicine Frequently Asked Questions

#### **Is Nuclear Medicine safe?**

Yes. The average amount of radiation a patient is exposed to during a nuclear medicine test is extremely low and is comparable to that of an X-ray.

#### **What will I experience during my exam?**

The technologist will explain the procedure to you in detail and answer any questions that you might have. At this time, you will be given a small amount of a radioactive tracer, which may be injected or swallowed. Depending on the kind of study you are having, the imaging portion of your exam may begin immediately or may be scheduled for several hours or even days later. Patients who are required to return at a later time will be instructed exactly when they should return and if they can eat or drink in the interim. It is imperative that patients are not late upon their return as that may put the integrity of their exam at risk. For the imaging process, you will be asked to lie on the exam table. A technologist will position a special camera over the part of your body to be scanned. It is essential that you are as still as possible during the scanning. The technologist may place you in one or two different positions during the exam and will readjust the camera accordingly.

#### **What happens after my exam?**

Once your exam is over, you can resume your normal activities.