

If there is a chance you could be pregnant, please tell the tech.

Hepatobiliary Scan

A hepatobiliary scan is a test that shows your liver function using a radioactive tracer. It finds problems such as:

- Gallstones
- Bile leak
- Blockages in the flow of bile from the gall bladder to the liver

The amount of radiation used in this test is small and well within limits that are not harmful to you. You will have the test in the Nuclear Medicine Department. It lasts about 3 to 6 hours. The total test time depends on why the test was ordered. The test may involve more than 1 appointment. The care team might ask you to return the next day for about 30 minutes to finish the test.

Before the test

The night before the test

Do not eat or drink anything after midnight the night before your test.

12 hours before the test

Do not take any pain medicine 12 hours before the test.

On the day of the test, please come to the 8th floor Reception Desk in Galter Pavilion, 201 East Huron Street, at your scheduled appointment time. Be sure to bring your:

- Physician's written order for the test if you have one
- List of allergies
- List of all your current medications (prescription, over-the-counter and herbal)
- Photo ID
- Medical insurance information
- Medicare card (Medicare patients only)

Parking is available for patients and visitors in the garage at 222 East Huron Street, across from Feinberg and Galter pavilions. For a discounted rate, bring your parking ticket with you. You can validate your ticket at the Customer Services Desk on the 1st, 2nd or 8th floor of Feinberg and Galter pavilions, and the 1st floor of Prentice Women's Hospital.

During the test

When you arrive in to the Nuclear Medicine Department, a nurse or technologist (tech) will ask you questions about your medical history.

If you think you might be pregnant or are breastfeeding, please tell the tech before the start of the test and before you are given an injection.

The tech will ask you to lie on an imaging table. They will put an intravenous (IV) line into a vein in your arm or hand. They will give you an injection of the radioactive tracer. The tech then will position a camera over your stomach. They will take pictures for about 1 hour. At the end of the 1st hour, they will take 2 more pictures from different angles.

A physician will review the pictures. In most cases, They will ask the tech to take extra pictures to get more detailed information. They may take these pictures 2, 4, 6 and 24 hours after the injection. At each of these time periods, they will take 3 pictures. The physician will review every set of pictures. The tech will tell you if you need more pictures and if you need to come back to the Nuclear Medicine Department the next day.

After the test

You may go back to your normal activities and diet after the test. The radioactive tracer you were given is not harmful and becomes nonradioactive within hours.

Talk with your physician about your test results. You can get a copy of your test results about 1 week after the test from the Medical Records Department on the 2nd floor of Galter Pavilion.

If you have any questions about this test, please call the Nuclear Medicine Department at 312.926.2340 (TTY:711) Monday through Friday, 7:30 am to 5:00 pm.