



Having a Meckel's diverticulum scan

A Meckel's scan is a nuclear medicine test involving radiation that is used to diagnose Meckel's diverticulum. A Meckel's diverticulum is a pouch in the lower part of the small intestine. It appears during the development of the small intestine and the pouch is formed from tissue similar to that of the pancreas or stomach. The Meckel's diverticulum may release acid like the stomach, which can form ulcers and lead to gastrointestinal bleeding.

Is it safe for me to have the scan?

For this scan it is necessary to inject a small amount of radioactive tracer, called a radiopharmaceutical, in order to take the pictures. The small risk from this radiation dose is outweighed by the information that will be gained by having the scan. There is a table at the end of this leaflet with radiation risks from various sources. Ask if you want any more information. All investigations are vetted to make sure this is the appropriate test for you. If you do not understand why you need to have this scan, please speak to the doctor who referred you.

Could you be pregnant?

If you know that you are pregnant, or there is any chance that you may be pregnant, please contact the department where you will be having the scan. **Do this as soon as possible as the scan may be postponed. Also contact the department if you are breastfeeding**, as we may give you special instructions.

Preparation for your scan

You should have nothing to eat or drink from midnight the night before the scan. However, you may drink water as normal.

What happens during the scan?

You will have a radioactive injection in a vein in your arm that feels like a blood test. This will travel through the blood supply to your intestine. You will not feel any different after having the injection. The scan will take place 5 minutes after the injection. You will be lying down on the scanning bed on your back and it is very important that you stay as still as possible for the scan. The camera will be close to you while we take some pictures, but it will not touch you.



You do not need to undress for the scan, but we will ask you to remove any metal items such as a belt, jewellery etc. The scan lasts about one hour in total.

After your scan

You may eat and drink normally once the scan has finished.

It is very unlikely that you will feel any side effects after the test, but if you think that you have, please let the Medical Physics Department know.

You may continue all your normal activities unless you have been advised otherwise.

Your results

Your scan will be looked at by a specialist doctor, who will issue a report. The report will be sent to the doctor who requested your scan rather than to your GP. This is because the doctor who requested your scan will have all the results from other tests and will be able to tell you how the result of your Meckel's scan affects your care.

Contacting us

Medical Physics Department, Level 1 North Block, Monday to Friday, 9.00 am to 5.00pm.

If you have any questions about your treatment, please ask the staff looking after you or telephone 0118 322 7355 or email: rbb-tr.physics@nhs.net

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

RBFT Physics & Clinical Engineering Department, January 2026.

Next review due: January 2028.

The table below is a simple guide to the levels of radiation risks for various examinations. These are measured in millisieverts (mSv).

Source of exposure (using RBFT local diagnostic reference levels (DRLs) for Nuclear Medicine)	Dose
Having a chest x-ray	0.014 mSv
Taking a transatlantic flight	0.08 mSv
UK average annual radiation dose	2.7 mSv
Meckel's scan	5.2 mSv
CT scan of the chest – CT scan of whole spine	6.6 mSv – 10 mSv