

Having a kidney function test as an outpatient

A kidney function test, otherwise known as Glomerular Filtration Rate test (or GFR) is generally considered to be the best way of assessing kidney function. The test is often used before, and sometimes during, chemotherapy sessions to monitor kidney function. It is very important to know the level of kidney function before prescribing some chemotherapy drugs.

Before the test

The GFR test is carried out in the Medical Physics Department, which is near to the Berkshire Cancer Centre, and is just opposite the entrance to the radiotherapy treatment area. The closest car park is the one at the London Road entrance or alternatively, you can be dropped off at the side entrance of the Berkshire Cancer Centre on Redlands Road. The test takes approximately four to five hours, but you do not have to stay in the department for that time. There is no preparation required and you can eat and drink normally on the morning before you come for your appointment.

What happens during the test

When you arrive in the department you will be given an injection of a small amount of radioactive solution into a vein. There are no side effects from the radioactive solution and it will only stay in your body for a few hours after the test. No special precautions are necessary because the radiation dose used is very small, so it is quite safe for you to be near other people.



The small risk from this radiation dose is outweighed by the information that will be gained by having the test. Ask if you want any more information. All investigations are vetted to make sure this is the appropriate test for you. If you don't understand why you need to have this test please speak to the doctor who referred you.

You will be asked to return to the department for three blood tests. These will be at two, three and four hours after the injection. The time in between the injection and blood tests can be spent as you please and you are not required to stay in the hospital.



After the test

After the injection, you can eat and drink normally but we ask you to have only one cup of coffee during the whole procedure due to the caffeine content. Please feel free to bring a packed lunch and a drink with you. Alternatively, if you prefer to buy refreshments within the hospital, there is a tea bar in the reception area of the Berkshire Cancer Centre and a pleasant conservatory cafe on the level 1 corridor in Battle Block.



The results

The results of this test will be sent to your consultant before they are able to prescribe your chemotherapy. Your clinician will discuss what the levels of your test results mean.

If you have any questions about your treatment, please ask the staff looking after you or telephone 0118 322 7355 (fax: 0118 322 7377)

or email : PhysicsDepartment@royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Medical Physics Department, Level 1 North Block

Reception: Monday to Friday, 9.00 am to 5.00pm

For more information about the Trust, visit our website www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

This information can be made available in other languages and formats upon request

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