

Stopping breastfeeding until advised (by milk testing) for certain radioactive tests

Department of Nuclear Medicine

Information for Patients

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Introduction

This leaflet is for breastfeeding individuals having:

- ☐ a nuclear medicine test less than 7 days after giving birth.
- ☐ a nuclear medicine test where breastfeeding guidance is not available from the Department of Health's public body (Administration of Radioactive Substances Advisory Committee (ARSAC)).

Your doctor would like you to have a nuclear medicine test which involves radiation. You will have received another leaflet which will tell you about your test.

There are special instructions in this leaflet which breastfeeding individuals need to follow. It also answers some questions you may have.

Different tests may have different breastfeeding instructions. Please only follow the instructions on the leaflet given to you by the department.

Why do I have stop to breastfeeding?

During the test we will give you a small amount of radioactive tracer. Different tests use different levels of radiation. Different types of tracers go to different body parts.

Some of the tracer can go into your breastmilk. If your child drinks this milk they could take in a small amount of the radioactive substance. We advise you to stop breastfeeding for the test until we tell you to continue. This is to reduce the radiation dose to your child as much as possible.

**Health information and support is available at www.nhs.uk
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk

What happens on the day of the test?

It is important that you follow these instructions:

1. Anytime before your test, you need to have at least 1 feed expressed and stored. You should label the bottle or container with the **time** and **date**. You can use this to feed your child after the test.
2. You should feed your child normally just before the start of your test.
3. 3 to 4 hours after you have been given your radioactive tracer:
 - You need to express your milk fully from both breasts and put it into a bottle or container. Give this to the department for testing. **You now cannot feed your child your breastmilk.**
 - You need to feed your child some other way (see page 3). You can use any milk you expressed and stored before the test started.
4. Continue to feed your child some other way at your usual feeding times.

After the test

- You have to bring your expressed milk into the department. You might have to do this for 1 or 2 days. This can be for longer sometimes. We will let you know about this on the day of your test.
- We use your breast milk to check the levels of radioactive tracer present in your milk. This will let us know when you can go back to breastfeeding your child. This procedure is followed if it is less than 7 days since you have given birth, or if there is no national breastfeeding guidance for the type of test you are having.
- **Do not** go back to breastfeeding until we tell you to. This is to let the amount of radioactivity in your milk go down. This will keep the radioactivity your child gets from your milk to a very low level.
- You should express fully from both breasts. Expressing your milk after your test will get rid of some of the radioactivity from your breast area. You **must not** give this milk to your child.

Why use radioactivity?

Different types of tests tell your doctor different things. Your doctor thinks that a nuclear medicine test involving radiation is the best type of test for you.

How much radiation will my child get from my breast milk?

If you follow the advice in this leaflet your child will get only a tiny amount of radiation from your breastmilk.

Everyone gets a small amount of radiation from the environment. The radiation dose your child will get will be less than what we all get every 6 months from the environment. You do not need to worry.

How should I feed my child when I can't breastfeed?

- **Use expressed breastmilk from before your test:** you can express and store your milk before the start of the test. You can use this milk to feed your child after the test.
- **Special feeding cups:** if your child has only been breastfed or is still learning how to breastfeed, there are special cups that you can use instead of bottles. You will need someone to show you how to do this (see contact details below). Even very young children can be fed in this way.
- **Training bottles and cups:** if your child sometimes uses a bottle or trainer cup you can use this to feed them.

If you need help with expressing and storing your milk or feeding your child, please ask your midwife, your health visitor or a voluntary breastfeeding counsellor (see details below).

More information and guidance is available from the following organisations:

- For advice on how to express and store your milk, visit the NHS website:
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/breastfeeding-and-bottle-feeding/breastfeeding/expressing-breast-milk/>
- National Childbirth Trust: 0300 330 0700 <https://www.nct.org.uk/>
- La Leche League GB: 0345 120 2918 <https://www.laleche.org.uk/>
- National Breastfeeding Helpline: 0300 100 0212
- Association of Breastfeeding Mothers: <https://abm.me.uk/>

Getting to your appointment

For patients who meet eligible criteria, our patient transport service is available if you need transport to and from your appointment. Please see our website:

<https://www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk>

Directions to Nuclear Medicine:

- Leicester Royal Infirmary: Level 0, Sandringham Building (behind the multi-storey car park).
- Glenfield Hospital: the department is best reached from the east entrance.

Contact details

For specific information about your test, please contact (answering machine is checked during office hours):

- Leicester Royal Infirmary: 0116 258 5627
- Glenfield Hospital: 0116 258 3850
- Leicester Radiopharmacy Service: 0116 258 5579

If you have a question about your medical condition please contact your GP or the doctor who made your referral.

Further information

Useful websites:

www.bnms.org.uk

www.radiologyinfo.org

www.patient.co.uk

If you have any questions, write them down here to remind you what to ask:

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔
على هذه المعلومات بلغة أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل
જો તમને અન્ય ભાષામાં આ માહિતી જોઈતી હોય, તો નીચે આપેલ નંબર પર કૃપા કરી ટેલિફોન કરો

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਗਏ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।
Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić pod podany niżej numer telefonu

If you would like this information in another language or format such as EasyRead or Braille, please telephone 0116 250 2959 or email equality@uhl-tr.nhs.uk