

You will not be asked to change your clothes but you may be asked to remove some jewellery before the scan.

### **Are there any side effects?**

Having the scans should not affect you in any way. The procedure will not affect your ability to drive home and it is not necessary for anyone to accompany you unless you so wish.

### **Are there any risks or complications?**

The amount of radioactivity you receive is so little that you do not need to avoid any activity or being with people after receiving it. However, if you could be or are pregnant or breast feeding you **MUST** let the department know before the test starts.

It is important that you do not have some other nuclear medicine investigations/treatments performed for some time before or during the week of the SeHCAT test. If any other investigations which involve giving you radioactivity are booked or have been carried out within the six months before your SeHCAT appointment, please let the department who send you your SeHCAT appointment know as soon as possible so they can ensure there is no effect on the SeHCAT results.

The other tests which might interfere with a SeHCAT scan are colonoscopy or other tests performed in the x-ray department to look at your large bowel (colon). These tests involve taking a very strong laxative to flush out the bowel completely. Therefore, ~~these tests~~ should not be done in the few days before the first scan or the days ~~between the first and second scan~~. If you ~~have been booked for one of these bowel tests~~ please contact the department so your SeHCAT appointment can be rearranged. The relevant contact number will be found on your SeHCAT appointment letter.



### **For further information please contact:**

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# **South Wales Neuroendocrine Tumour Service**



## **A Guide to having a SeHCAT Scan**

## What is a SeHCAT Scan?

A SeHCAT scan is a specific test used to diagnose a condition called bile acid malabsorption. If you have a SeHCAT scan and it is positive it will help us to choose the treatment that might help you best.

When you eat, bile acids are released from your liver and gall bladder into your upper intestine (duodenum). They help to digest fat as it travels through your small bowel. When the bile acids reach the far end of your small bowel, they are recycled. They are reabsorbed back into your body and travel back in the blood stream to your liver. They are stored here until they are needed again for the next meal.

Bile acid malabsorption may be caused by a number of reasons. If the area of the bowel where reabsorption occurs has been removed by surgery, or becomes diseased or damaged, it may not be possible for enough of the bile acids to be absorbed back into your body. As a result, too much bile acid reaches your lower intestine (colon) and causes fluid to be pumped into your colon by your body. This can cause loose or watery stools. Other conditions that may cause the condition are having your gall bladder removed (cholecystectomy), coeliac disease and **diseases of the pancreas**. **Radiotherapy** can also cause bile acid malabsorption as

can certain medications such as metformin (used for type 2 diabetes).

## How is a SeHCAT scan carried out?

A SeHCAT is usually carried out in a medical physics or nuclear medicine department of a hospital and is a two part test.

The exact way in which the test is done will depend on the equipment available in the hospital you're attending and you will be provided with specific details with your appointment. However, on the first visit you will normally have a scan before you are given anything. This scan should take no more than fifteen minutes. You will then be asked to swallow a capsule or small amount of liquid (depending on where you have the scan done) which contains a synthetic bile acid which is slightly radioactive. The amount of radioactivity is very small and is equivalent to much less than the amount we are all exposed to in our daily lives every year. It is also much less than the amount used in most diagnostic tests using radiation and certainly much less than is used when radiotherapy is given to treat cancer.

After you have swallowed the capsule or liquid, depending on what type of scanner is being used, the second scan may follow immediately or you may be asked to wait for an hour or more. This scan should

again take no more than fifteen minutes. You will then be free to go and will be asked to return in exactly one week when the scan will be performed again. The difference between the scans on the first and second days will tell us whether you have bile acid malabsorption.

## How do I prepare for a SeHCAT scan?

You may eat and drink as normal before the test.

Please contact the department who send you your appointment if you take any medications for your bowels as they *may* need to be stopped before the test, for example:

- Cholestyramine (Sequestran/Questran)
- Colestipol
- Colesevelam (Cholestagel)
- Loperamide

Please take a list of your current medications with you to your appointment for the scan.

