

Carer and comforters in nuclear medicine

Patient information

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If you need this leaflet in a different language or accessible format
please speak to a member of staff who can arrange it for you.

اگر به این بروشور به زبان دیگر یا در قالب دسترس پذیر نیاز دارید،
لطفاً با یکی از کارکنان صحبت کنید تا آن را برای شما تهیه کند.

Jeśli niniejsza ulotka ma być dostępna w innym języku lub formie,
proszę skontaktować się z członkiem personelu, który ją dla Państwa przygotowuje.

Dacă aveți nevoie de această broșură într-o altă limbă sau într-un format accesibil,
vă rog să discutați cu un membru al personalului să se ocupe
de acest lucru pentru dumneavoastră

如果您需要本传单的其他语言版本或无障碍格式，请联系工作人员为您安排。

إذا احتجت إلى هذه النشرة بلغة أخرى، أو بتنسيق
يسهل الوصول إليه، يرجى التحدث إلى أحد الموظفين لترتيب ذلك لك.

Caring for or comforting a relative, friend or resident during or after a nuclear medicine procedure

Notes

We have given you this information leaflet because you have offered to provide physical or emotional support to your relative, friend or resident during or after their nuclear medicine scan. It contains important information about being a 'carer and comforter' and explains the potential risks.

If you are happy to act as your relative, friend or resident's carer and comforter after reading this information leaflet, we will ask you to complete a form before their procedure. We will explain the form to you and answer any questions you may have.

What are 'carers and comforters'?

Individuals who knowingly and willingly expose themselves to a small amount of ionising radiation in order to care for or support someone undergoing, or have undergone a procedure that involves radiation, excluding healthcare professionals, are legally known as 'carers and comforters'. This includes occupations such as prison guards, hospital staff from other departments and social workers etc.

Are there any hazards or risks associated with being a carer and comforter?

As part of the nuclear medicine scan your relative, friend or resident will receive a small amount of ionising radiation and will become temporarily radioactive.

As you are providing care and/or comfort, you will also be exposed to a small amount of radiation.

The amount of radiation you are exposed to will depend on:

- the type of procedure
- how much care and support you need to provide (during the procedure if required and in the following days).

The amount of radiation most carers and comforters are exposed to, is similar to the amount you would be exposed to if you were to go on a return flight from the UK to Australia.

We will do everything we can to ensure that the amount of radiation you are exposed to, is kept as low as possible.

However, we are legally required to provide you with information relating to the level of radiation you will be exposed to and the related risk.

Please tell us if you are, or might be pregnant so we can decide whether it is appropriate for you to act as a carer and comforter. It will also allow the healthcare professional to make adjustments, to make sure the dose to you and your unborn baby is as low as possible.

Children (those under the age of 18) would not normally be considered for the role of a carer and/or comforter, but exceptional circumstances can be considered.

The radiographers will be able to advise you about this should this apply to you. Please ask the radiographers if you have any further questions or concerns before the start of the examination.

Increased risk of cancer

The small amount of radiation you will be exposed to during your relative, friend or resident's procedure can slightly increase your risk of developing cancer later on in your life. The older you are, the lower your risk of developing cancer in the future will be.

How can I minimise the amount of radiation I am exposed to?

Follow the advice below, to help minimise the amount of radiation you are exposed to.

- Time - try to keep the time spent close to your relative, friend or resident as low as possible (especially when the radiation dose is first given, as this is when they will be most radioactive).
- Distance - the further away you are from your relative, friend or resident, the less radiation you will be exposed to.
- Good hygiene - some of the radiation we give your relative, friend or resident will come out of their body in their bodily fluids, such as their urine. For this reason, it is important that you wash your hands or any other areas that may have come into contact with their bodily fluids using soap and water. We will offer you some disposable gloves if you need to handle nappies, incontinence pads or catheter bags.

How do I consent?

If you are to act as a carer or comforter, we need you to sign a form before the examination in order to state that you understand that you are agreeing to act in this role and to confirm that the small risks associated with the radiation exposure have been explained to you and that you knowingly and willingly accept the risks and wish to continue.

What happens if I say no?

If you do not wish to act as a carer and comforter, that is absolutely your choice and your decision will be fully respected. You are under no obligation to be present during the radiology procedure.

The radiology team will try to make alternative arrangements, to ensure the patient is supported and cared for appropriately. Please note, this may include rearranging the appointment date.

For more information, please scan the QR code.

If you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact the nuclear medicine department on 0151 430 1550.

