Thyroid Uptake and Scan

What is a Thyroid Uptake and Scan?
A thyroid uptake and scan is a diagnostic imaging scan that allows the radiologist to determine the function of the thyroid. This scan can determine if the patient has thyroid cancer: persistent or recurrent disease, hyperthyroidism and thyroid nodule or goiter assessment.

How should I prepare for a Thyroid Uptake and Scan?
You will be directed by your Doctor to either withdrawal from thyroid replacement hormone (Synthroid/Levothyroxine) for 4-6 weeks, or scheduled for thyrogen injections prior to your scan. We will not be able to do this scan if you have had any IV iodine contrast/CT contrast for 4 weeks prior to your scan.

How long does the test take?
When you arrive to the nuclear medicine department you will be given two radioactive iodine capsules. There are no side effects to these capsules. They are absorbed by your thyroid to allow the doctor to see how your thyroid is functioning. The capsules have to circulate for four hours before we can do the scan. After you swallow the capsules you will be allowed to leave the department with a time to return four hours later. When you return we will use a probe over your thyroid to see how much of the capsules were absorbed. Then we will take four images of your thyroid. To do this you will lie onto our imaging table with a camera positioned over your thyroid. This process will take approximately 45 minutes. You may be required to return the following day for additional images.

How soon will the scan results be available?
A radiologist will interpret the images, write a report, and deliver the results to your doctor via the internal computer system. This process usually takes less than 24 hours.

It is essential to tell your doctor if you are pregnant or think you might be pregnant before undergoing this scan because of radiation exposure.

If you would need to cancel your appointment please notify the Nuclear Medicine department as soon as possible at 216.444.2807.