Gallbladder Exam

What is a gallbladder exam?
A gallbladder exam is used to see how your gallbladder and bile ducts are working. The test helps your doctor decide if your stomach pain is caused by your gallbladder. This test is also called a hepatobiliary exam, HIDA scan, PIPIDA Scan, or a DISIDA Scan. The test is done in the Nuclear Medicine department.

What do I need to do before the test?
- Do not eat or drink anything after midnight the morning of the exam.
- Do not take any prescribed pain medication at least 12 hours before the exam.
- Do not wear a shirt with metal buttons, zippers or other decoration.
- There is a chance that a very small amount of morphine may be given to you during this exam. If you do not have a driver with you, you may be asked to stay until a nurse says that you are able to drive yourself home. The nurse will evaluate you to help make that decision. If you are currently taking a narcotic (pain medicine) or are allergic to morphine, please tell the technician.
- Please call the X-ray department if you cannot make your appointment.

What can I expect during the test?
- You will lie on a scan table. An IV will be placed in your arm. You will be given a radiotracer through the IV. The dye will go to your liver, gallbladder and small bowel. You will not feel any effect of the dye.
- If you have had your gallbladder removed in the past, your test will be done after 60 minutes or less.
- If your gallbladder has not been removed in the past, your test will last a bit longer. A second medication called CCK (sincalide, cholecystokinin) will be given to you through the IV. It will take 30 minutes for this medication to be given. This medicine will cause your gallbladder to work so that your doctor can see if your gallbladder works well or not. This medicine may cause you to feel some of the same pain you have been feeling. The pain will stop quickly after the CCK medicine is stopped.
- If your gallbladder is not seen well, a small amount of morphine may be given. After you have been given the morphine, your technician will continue the scan for about 30 more minutes.
- Often your doctor may want to take pictures up to 4 hours after the start of the exam. This is called delayed imaging.

What can I expect after the test?
- After the test is done, the X-ray doctor will read the results and report them to your doctor. Your doctor will discuss the results of the exam with you.

The information presented is intended for general information and educational purposes. It is not intended to replace the advice of your health care provider. Contact your health care provider if you believe you have a health problem.