Nuclear Medicine is a branch of radiology that relies on imaging small amounts of radioactive isotopes within the body. The radioisotopes, as they are called, are usually injected into your bloodstream; however, for some tests they are either swallowed or inhaled.

As the radioisotope collects in the area of our body being visualized, it gives of energy that is detected by a nuclear (gamma) camera. The camera sends this information to a computer so they can be turned into images and interpreted by the radiologist. The more common exams performed in nuclear medicine include bone scans, lung scans, and thyroid scans.

Nuclear Medicine Exams are performed in the following locations; please contact us for more information or to schedule an appointment:

St. Joseph's Regional Medical Center, Paterson: 973.754.2690

St. Joseph's Wayne Hospital, Wayne: 973.956.3312

St. Joseph's Ambulatory Imaging Center at Carlstadt 201.372.1020

What should I expect when I undergo my nuclear medicine exam?

- You will receive specific instructions based on the type of exam you will be having. In general, the following guidelines apply to most scans:

- You will be asked to provide a list of the medications you are currently taking, as well as any known allergies you have.
- You will probably be allowed to keep your regular clothing on during the test, but avoid wearing anything with zippers or metal snaps, since they can sometimes interfere with the exam pictures.
- You will most likely be lying down on the exam table and the nuclear camera will be positioned close to your body. If an injection of the isotope is required, an intravenous line will be started in your arm.
- The time it takes for the injected material to reach the area of interest in your body may be minutes, or it may be hours. The technologist will let you know before the exam starts, so that you will have an idea of how long you will be in the department.
- When it I time for the imaging to begin, the camera will take a series of pictures. When it does so, you will be asked to remain very still, so that motion does not blur the pictures.