# Pediatric DMSA Scan

DMSA (dimercaptosuccinic acid) is a nuclear medicine tracer that works through the kidneys to check how your child's kidneys are working, their shape, size and location, and if there is any damage or scarring from infections.

DMSA scans are needed if your child has one of these problems:

- Kidney infections
- Kidney function issues or concerns
- Kidney is not in the normal place in the body (ectopic kidney)
- Loss of blood flow and oxygen supply to tissue or organs
- High blood pressure
- Horseshoe kidney
- Acute renal failure
- Multicystic dysplastic kidney
- Kidney trauma

**Sedation**

Talk with your doctor if you think your child will need sedation for this test. If your child needs to be sedated, staff will call you the day before. They will tell you what time your child needs to stop eating and drinking the night before.

**Day of the Test**

Check in at AFCH Imaging when you arrive. A Nuclear Medicine staff member will explain the test. A Child Life Specialist can help support you and your child during the visit.

Your child will get an IV for the DMSA medicine. They may also get IV fluids. If your child does not need sedation, the IV will be removed after the medicine is given.

The medicine takes about 2-3 hours to travel through the bloodstream and reach the kidneys. During this time, if your child does not need sedation, they may eat, drink, or take a walk. When you return, check in again at AFCH Imaging. Staff will take you to Nuclear Medicine for the scan.

During the scan, your child will lie flat on an exam table while a special camera takes pictures of the kidneys. The scan takes 30-105 minutes. For children younger than 12, it is often closer to 105 minutes. Your child must lie very still during the scan. One or 2 parents or caregivers may stay with your child.

You may want to bring books, a movie, or a bottle to help your child stay calm and still. If your child cannot lie still, they may need sedation. If your child needs to be sedated, the nurses will explain each step of the process.

After the scan, your child will be taken to a recovery area. Once your child is stable, you may leave the clinic or go to a follow-up visit. During the visit, your child's doctor will discuss the test results with you.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911.Copyright © 8/2026 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#7185