

## PET-CT Department

### What is a PET-CT scan?

PET-CT (Positron Emission Tomography and Computerised Tomography) is a scanning method that allows us to see how organs are working. PET-CT helps us identify organs or tissues that are not working normally. The body is imaged following the injection of a radioactive tracer (most commonly 18-FDG a form of slightly radioactive sugar). This provides important information about many conditions affecting different organs and these images allow your doctor to plan your treatment more accurately.

### Do I need to confirm my appointment?

- **Yes** it is important that you telephone and confirm this appointment. This way we can give your appointment to another patient if you are unable to attend.
- Please allow plenty of time to get to the department as your radioactive tracer is specially ordered and scan times cannot normally be delayed.
- When confirming please tell us if any of the following apply:
  - You have had chemotherapy within the last three weeks.
  - You have had radiotherapy within the last three months.
  - You have had surgery within the last three months.
  - You have had a recent infection.
  - You are pregnant, breast feeding, or have young children at home.
  - You have had previous MRI or CT scans that you have found hard to tolerate or you are claustrophobic.
  - You are a diabetic.
  - You are unable to lie flat.

### Preparing for your scan

- Have nothing to eat for six hours prior to your appointment time. Check your appointment letter.
- You should drink plenty of plain water. Please avoid flavoured water.
- Take all prescribed medications on the day of your scan as usual, unless otherwise instructed on your appointment letter.
- Please leave all jewellery at home as we need to remove all metallic objects for the scan. A hospital gown will be provided for the scan.
- Please avoid strenuous exercise for 24 hours prior to your scan appointment, for example, running, cycling, horse riding and gym exercise.

## What will happen on the day of the scan?

- This will depend on what type of scan you are having. Our staff will fully explain the procedure to you when you arrive for your appointment.
- A needle will be inserted into a vein in your arm, hand or foot. We will then take a small blood sample for analysis.
- A small amount of a radioactive tracer will be injected through this needle.
- You will then lie and relax quietly for 60 to 90 minutes before having the scan.
- We will then ask you to lie on your back on the scanner table with your arms placed above your head.
- You may be given another injection of a X-ray dye during the CT scan.
- Most scans last between 30 to 45 minutes.

## How long will I be in the department for?

- This will depend on what type of scan you are having but expect to be with us for between two and four hours. This includes preparation and scanning time.

## Can I bring someone with me?

- You can bring a relative or friend but they will have to wait in the waiting room. Space is limited so we ask that just one person accompany you if possible.
- Please do not bring children or pregnant friends or relatives with you.

## What are the benefits?

- PET/CT combines two types of imaging in one scan.
- Your doctors get functional information from the PET scan as well as organ anatomy from the CT scan.

## Are there any side effects or risks?

- The scan involves an injection of a small amount of a radioactive tracer which will remain in your body for a few hours. This will not normally cause you any problems
- Very rarely there may be bruising at the site of the injection.
- If you have the CT dye injection you may get a warm flush feeling during the injection.

## What happens after my scan?

- You are free to go home
- You may eat and drink as normal
- Continue to drink plenty of fluids for the remainder of the day and empty your bladder regularly
- Please avoid close contact with pregnant women and young children for six hours after your scan.

## When will I get my results?

- Your results will be sent to the doctor who requested your scan
- Results are usually with your doctor within a week.
- If you have a further appointment with your doctor, please let us know the date when you attend for your scan.

## Alternatives

- This scan forms part of a series of investigations your doctor will be undertaking. There is no equivalent scan to this study.



We are currently working towards a smoke-free site. Smoking is only permitted in the designated smoking areas.

For advice and support in quitting, contact your GP or the free NHS Stop Smoking helpline on 0800 169 0 169

### Help with this leaflet:



If you would like this information in another language, large print or audio format, please ask the department to contact Patient Information: 01223 216032 or [patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk)



### Document history

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