

What is PET?

Your physician has ordered a Positron Emission Tomography (PET) scan for you. PET images can provide information about many conditions affecting the heart, brain, and other organs, which will help your doctor plan appropriate treatment for you.

PET images are different than those images for more conventional radiology studies, such as X-Ray, CT, Ultrasound, or MRI. These routine radiology procedures show what the tissues look like by making pictures of the different organ structures.

PET images contain information about the body's chemistry, cell function, and exact location of disease. The PET images represent unique information about the physiology of the organ systems. PET scans, when combined with a CT Scan give your doctor more powerful information that can affect your care.

What is PET/CT?

The PET/CT scan combines the PET scan as described above, with a CT scan that uses a special attenuation technique. It is a non-contrast CT allowing the overlay of your anatomy to

better localize any areas of concern. This combination of PET and CT also allows for shorter patient exam times on the table.

Can I eat or drink before my scan?

This will depend on the type of study, but typically, you will be asked not to eat any food or drink anything except water for at least four hours before your scan.

How much time should I allow?

You can expect to be in the PET/CT area for one and a half to three hours. The actual time of the scan is much less.

What does the procedure involve?

To begin the procedure, a small amount of radioactive glucose is injected into your bloodstream through a small I.V. started by the technologist. There is no danger to you from the injection.

Glucose (also known as sugar) is a common substance every cell in your body needs in order to function. The radiation exposure associated with PET is similar to a conventional CT scan.

After the injection, you will wait approximately an hour, while the injected glucose travels throughout your body.

You will then be asked to lie on a table that passes slowly through the scanner (a large square doughnut shaped machine). Some people fall asleep during the scan. The scanner makes very little noise, there is no I.V. contrast injection or "warm" sensations.

What should I do to prepare?

For your comfort and peace of mind, please be sure to:

Tell your doctor if you are pregnant, think you might be pregnant, or if you are a nursing mother.

- Wear comfortable clothing in layers.
- Tell your doctor and technologist if you are **diabetic**.
- Wear your hearing aid, glasses, and dentures to the hospital, but leave your valuables at home.
- Take your prescribed medicines the day of the test unless instructed differently by your doctor.
- Do not eat for at least four hours before your scan.

Drink 24-30 ounces of water over two hours before the scan. Black decaffeinated coffee (no cream or sugar) is acceptable along with the water.

How will I feel afterward?

You will be able to resume normal activities after the scan. There are no side-effects from the injected radioactive glucose.

Reports/Results:

A Radiologist, a physician experienced in nuclear medicine and other radiology exams, will interpret the images. A report will be available to within 24 hours on routine exams. A signed report with the interpretation will also be sent to the healthcare provider that ordered the test. You may check with your ordering physician for the report.



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PET/CT SCAN

**A Patient's Guide to
Radiological Exams**



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