

WHAT IS PET CT?

'PET' is short for positron emission tomography. PET creates an image of the chemical activity in your body. The PET scan shows the level of activity in the cells and blood flow in tissues and organs. PET is often used to detect brain disease, blood vessel disease, and cancer.

WHAT IS A CT SCAN?

'CT' stands for computed tomography. CT uses x-rays and a computer to make a picture of sections of the body. The picture is called a scan. A CT scan shows the body's organs in greater detail and more clearly than regular x-rays.

HOW DOES PET CT WORK?

When you have a PET CT exam, a small amount of radioactive material is injected into your blood stream. This small amount is not harmful to you. The radioactive material joins with natural chemicals in your body and then gives off (emits) tiny invisible

PRECAUTION

If you are pregnant or think you might be, or if you are breast-feeding, tell your doctor or radiographer before the test. It is also important that we are informed if you are diabetic.

HOW DO I PREPARE FOR THE TEST?

- You should arrange for someone to drive you to the test if possible.
- The day before your scan you should have low carbohydrate meals and refrain from strenuous exercise.
- Do not eat or drink anything for at least 6 hours before the test. If your doctor tells you to take your regular medicine, take it only with a small sip of water.
- Before the day of your test, tell your doctor all the medicines you take. Do as your doctor tells you about taking your regular medicines. If you have diabetes, ask the Radiographer in charge about any special instructions for taking insulin

WHAT HAPPENS DURING THE TEST?

You'll receive the radioactive material by an intravenous line (IV) inserted in your arm. You will then sit quietly in a darkened room while the radioactive material moves throughout your body. Before going to the scanning room, you will be asked to empty your bladder.

The PET CT scanner is shaped like a large ring or doughnut. The scanning table will move slowly through the ring. You will need to lie very still for the entire test. The scan is painless; you should not feel anything.

The scan is carried out in two parts:

1. A CT scan is carried out first. You will be positioned comfortably for your scan. It is important that you keep this position for the rest of the test.

During the CT scan, you may need to have an injection of a special 'dye' or

particles.

The scanner detects them and the computer displays an image on the screen. The image is color coded — different colors show various levels of cell activity. The images are then overlapped with the CT scan images and this gives greater detail as to the position of increased cell activity.

and other diabetes medicines.

- Wear loose-fitting, comfortable clothes to the test. Leave all jewellery and other valuables at home.
- You should drink 2-3 glasses of water before coming for the scan.
- Your doctor or testing center may give you added instructions, based on the reason for your PET CT exam.
- Do not schedule any other test on the same day as your PET exam.

contrast agent either before or during your scan. This will usually be at your elbow and is similar to having a blood test. This 'dye' can sometimes give you a warm feeling for a short time as it is injected.

The table will be moved into the scanner so that the part of your body being imaged is inside the 'doughnut'. The radiographer will take the pictures from the control room, but you will be able to talk to you via an intercom, and they will be watching you during the scan.

2. Secondly a PET scan is carried out. These images take between 16 and 28 minutes. It is important that you remain still while these are being recorded. The radiographer will tell you how long you will have to lie for.

You'll be able to talk to the staff during the PET scan if you need to. You should however lie as quietly as possible to prevent movement. The complete exam will take about 2-3 hours. Both scans take about 30-40 minutes.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE TEST?

Most of the radioactive material will collect in your bladder. After the test, you should drink plenty of fluids to flush it out of your body.

ARE THERE ANY SIDE EFFECTS?

Not usually. You can drive home afterwards and may return to work as necessary. You will be able to eat and drink normally.

PET CT POSITRON EMISSION AND COMPUTERIZED TOMOGRAPHY



If you have any queries or concerns, our Nurses or Senior Therapists would be happy to talk to you. Please contact them via the following information.

USEFUL INFORMATION

Address: UPMC Whitfield Cancer Centre,
Cork Road, Co. Waterford

Telephone: 051337444

Website: UPMCWhitfieldCancerCentre.ie

HOW DO I GET MY RESULTS?

Your doctor will discuss the results of the test with you. Check with your doctor or the testing center about how and when to get your results.

QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS

It's normal to feel some anxiety before and during a test. But a PET CT scan should not be a frightening experience. Feel free to express concerns about your test to any member of staff.