PET/CT Patient’s Guide

Your doctor has referred you for a PET/CT scan at CISC located at the University of Sussex, Falmer Campus.

What is a PET/CT scan?

Positron Emission Tomography with Computed Tomography (PET/CT) is an imaging technique in which a small amount of radioactive sugar (\(^{18}\text{F}-\text{FDG}\)), once injected into one of your veins, provides information about the anatomy (CT) and function (PET) of your internal organs.

When your appointment is made we will need to know if any of the following applies to you:

- Chemotherapy within last 3 weeks.
- Radiotherapy/Surgery within last 3 months.
- Pregnancy, breast feeding, young children at home.
- Diabetes.
- Difficulty tolerating MRI or CT Scans due to claustrophobia.
- Difficulty lying flat with two or less pillows.
- If you are feeling unwell.
- Incontinence.
- In need of hospital transport.

Preparing for your scan

Diabetics will be issued separate fasting and medication instructions

- Do not eat for **6 hours** before the scan.
- Take regular medication as normal, with the exception of diabetic medication (see above).
- Bring a list of your medication with you to your appointment.
- Drink only plain unflavoured water during the 6 hours before your scan.
- Avoid strenuous activity and exercise for 24 hours prior to your appointment.
- If possible wear loose fitting clothes without metal zips / fasteners and minimal jewellery. If you would prefer, we are able to provide suitable clothing.
- If you are running late or unable to attend you must contact us IMMEDIATELY.
- Arrive 15 minutes prior to your appointment.
- You may bring a friend or relative provided that they are **over 18 and not pregnant**, however they will have to remain in the waiting room during your appointment.
- Expect to be in the department for **2-3 hours**.

Arriving for your Scan

- For **travel and parking instructions** please see separate information sheet.
- If you are in need of assistance please ask at **CISC reception**
- It is advisable to bring a concise history of recent medical procedures and a list of the medications that you are taking at the time of your appointment.

Important Information regarding this scan

On rare occasions, due to the complexity of both the scanner and the manufacturing of the injection (which occurs off-site), we can experience technical difficulties and may be unable to perform your scan. On these occasions we will inform you as soon as possible and will arrange a new appointment.
The Procedure

- A radiographer will escort you to a room in the scanning area and take a short medical history.
- At this point you will be asked to remove any metallic objects, including clothing and jewellery.
- A small needle will be inserted into a vein and a blood sample taken to ensure your blood glucose level is within the acceptable range. The radioactive sugar will then be injected.
- After the injection you must rest on a couch for 1 hour. This is to allow the injection to be absorbed by your body. During this time you will not be permitted to read or listen to music.
- Immediately prior to your scan you will be sent to the toilet to empty your bladder.
- You will then be taken into the scan room, where you will lie on your back with your arms supported above your head. In certain circumstances we may scan you with your arms by your side.
- The scan will take 25-60 minutes, depending on the type of scan.
- It is very important that you keep very still during the entire scan.

After your scan

- Once the scan is completed it will be necessary for you to leave the centre straight away.
- You may eat and drink immediately after the scan.
- Drink plenty of fluids and empty your bladder frequently. This is to lower the radiation dose to your bladder and pelvis.
- Avoid contact with children and pregnant women for at least 4 hours after the scan.

Results

A report will be issued to your referring consultant within 1 week.

Risks: The injection of $^{18}\text{F-FDG}$ has no known side effects. There is radiation involved in the procedure but the risks associated with this are minimal and will have been considered by the doctor who authorised the scan.

Questions? If you have any questions or concerns regarding your appointment please contact us on the appropriate number.

(See front page.)

Reference no: 492.1    Pub date Sep 2012    Review date Sep