

Preparing for your PET/CT exam

There are strict preparation guidelines for all patients, especially diabetics, regarding what you can eat or drink before your exam. If you have questions regarding your preparation, please contact the scheduling department for instructions at 541.677.2345.

Guidelines for all patients include

Do not eat or drink anything, except water, for four to six hours prior to your exam.

Take your regularly scheduled medicine before arriving (if you can tolerate it on an empty stomach).

Avoid rigorous activity for 24-hours before your exam.

Dress warmly and comfortably.

If you are diabetic, eat a small meal four hours prior to your exam and take your insulin, if necessary. It is critical that you follow all preparation guidelines and ensure that your glucose levels are within normal limits, or the exam will need to be rescheduled.

Please make every effort to keep your appointment.

If you must cancel or reschedule, please notify our office at least 24-hours in advance. The FDG (sugar water with a radioactive tracer) used for your scan is prepared specifically for you, and will have to be discarded if you do not keep your appointment.

Consult your physician prior to your PET/CT scan if

- You are, or may be pregnant;
- You are allergic to any food or drugs;
- You are currently being treated for an infection;
- You are unsure if you should take your medications;
- You have had recent radiation therapy;



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What is a PET/CT Scan?

PET is short for Positron Emission Tomography. PET is a test that uses special imaging cameras and a radioactive type of sugar to produce pictures of the function and metabolism of cells in the body.

CT stands for Computerized Tomography. A CT is an X-ray test that generates a detailed view of the anatomy or structure of organs and tissues in the body. The CT scan can show the dimension of vessels, lymph nodes and organ systems.

A PET/CT can depict both technologies using a single machine. It provides a picture of function (PET), a picture of anatomy (CT) and a merged picture of both the body's metabolism and structure.



What to Expect

During the Exam

You will receive a small injection of FDG (sugar water with a radioactive tracer). You will sit or lie down on a comfortable chair or bed for 30-90 minutes while the FDG travels throughout your body.

You will lay flat on your back for this exam.

It is important that you don't move for the duration of the exam. The length of the exam is determined by your height and area of the body being scanned. When the total scan is finished, the computers will produce images for the radiologist to review.

After the Exam

Once the total scan has been performed, you may resume daily activity. Even though the FDG will quickly leave your body, you can expedite the process by drinking plenty of water after your scan is complete.

The reading physician will contact your referring physician to communicate all pertinent information from your scan. Then your referring physician will contact you to share the results.

Benefits of PET/CT

PET/CT helps physicians diagnose, stage and treat cancer with more accuracy than ever before. The exam can provide answers to the following critical questions:

- Where is the tumor?
- Is it spreading?
- How large is it?
- What is the optimal therapy?
- Is the therapy working?
- Is there a recurrence?

Other potential benefits include

- Improved diagnostic confidence for patients who have or may have cancer.
- Reduces the need for invasive procedures, like biopsy or surgery.
- Helps avoid the "wait and see" method, often used to monitor potential disease.
- Monitors patients' response to treatment.