

PET CT Patient Information Sheet

Please read all the information contained in this leaflet immediately so you do not miss instructions that may result in the cancellation of your scan.

Preparation

- Do not eat, chew or drink anything (except plain water) for **six hours** before your appointment. We require a blood glucose level between 4-12mmol/l; well-controlled diabetic patients are often able to achieve this with a reduced fasting time of **four hours**.
- Avoid caffeine for **12 hours** before your appointment. Caffeine can be found in teas, coffee (including decaf) and is also sometimes added to painkillers such as paracetamol.
- Drink 1-2 pints of water (plain water only, not sparkling or flavoured during the fasting period before your appointment.)
- Avoid strenuous activities for **24 hours** before your scan.
- All medication that can be taken **without food** should be taken as normal, especially pain relief. Medication taken with food, should be taken outside the fasting period.
- If possible, wear loose, warm clothing that does not have any metal (e.g. zips, underwire) and do not wear any jewellery.
- Please bring a list of current medication and any known allergies, details of recent vaccinations, a bottle of water to drink during your uptake time and any reading material you may require.
- Avoid all medical procedures, including urine collection for the 24hrs following injection.

Are there any risks from the radioactive tracer?

The radiotracer is used as sparingly as possible, and the benefits of this scan far outweigh the small risk from radiation. The radiation dose you will receive from your injection and scan is similar to the radiation received from natural sources during either 4 or 8 years, depending on the scan. Drinking plenty of fluids and emptying your bladder regularly will help to remove the radioactivity.

To reduce the radiation dose to others, for **six hours** after your injection we will ask you to:

- Avoid close contact with **children and pregnant women**.
- Maintain social distancing when possible and avoid crowded areas.
- Sit down when using the toilet to avoid splashes as your urine will be slightly radioactive.
- Double flush the toilet after use, with the lid down, and wash your hands.
- Avoid all medical procedures, including urine collections.

Six hours after your injection time is _____ (To be completed by staff on the day)

Due to the use of radiation in the department, companions or relatives cannot stay with you after your injection or during your scan. If you feel you have extenuating circumstances, for example needing a carer or translator, please contact us so we can make the necessary arrangements.

Pregnancy and Breastfeeding

Let us know in advance if you may be pregnant or are breastfeeding.

This is important because of the small risk of childhood cancer from the radiation that we use.

If you have male healthcare records and were registered female at birth, please talk to the technologist at your appointment so that they can rule out the possibility of pregnancy. This information will not be recorded or shared without your consent.

Limitations in PET-CT

The radiotracers needed for PET-CT are produced off site. Radiotracers are only radioactive for a short period of time; because of this we order several batches to arrive throughout the day. Occasionally a tracer fails to pass quality checks or is delayed in transit significantly enough to affect its activity. These occasions, whilst rare, are unavoidable and may result in having to reschedule your scan at the very last minute.

How is the scan performed?

On arrival you will be shown to your own 'uptake room' within PET CT. We record a short medical history, measure height and weight, check blood glucose levels with a small finger prick and insert a cannula (small tube) into your arm for the radioactive injection.

It takes an hour for the radioactive sugar to be distributed in the body. During this time, you will be encouraged to relax by reading, listening to music or sleeping.

The scan will take 30 minutes (certain scans may take longer). You will need to lie flat and still for the duration of the scan (pillows can be provided if required). The scanner is not noisy, and your head remains out of the scanner for the majority of the time, however if you feel you may become claustrophobic, please contact your GP to prescribe a sedative in advance.

After your scan is complete, we will offer you some refreshments because your fasting restrictions are now lifted. Feel free to bring your own food and drinks if preferred.

Results

Results will be sent to the doctor who referred you for the scan within five working days. Oncology patients should be aware their results may also require discussion in meetings with specialist teams; this may delay results but often means the care/treatment plan is also in place.

Travelling after your scan

Some transport hubs and major event venues have very sensitive radiation detectors. These detectors could be triggered by the small amount of radioactivity remaining in your body on the days following your scan. If you're planning to travel within **seven days** following your scan, we recommend that you carry your appointment letter with you.

Information for other hospitals or care homes

In the two days following your scan, if you are admitted to a care home or hospital (other than the RUH), or if you are cared for by a healthcare worker in your home, please ask them to contact the RUH PET CT department because they may need their employer to register with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

If you have any concerns or questions about your scan, or you need this information in another format such as larger print, please telephone: **01225 82 1995 or 5678**.

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Please contact the Patient Support and Complaints Team (PSCT) if you would like to feedback your experience of the hospital. Email ruh-tr.psct@nhs.net or telephone **01225 825656**

