

# PET/CT Information

## What is PET/CT?

PET/CT is a combination of two scanning (imaging) techniques, PET (Positron Emission Tomography) and CT (Computed Tomography). PET is a unique imaging system that measures metabolism (glucose uptake) to show the function or physiology of organs and tissues. CT provides the anatomical information; detailed structure of bones, organs and tissues. The PET and CT images combined together provide a complete picture for physicians to observe both function and structure.

## Why do I need a PET/CT exam?

One of the best ways to fight disease is through early detection. PET/CT exams enable physicians to diagnose potential health issues and identify the best plan of treatment. A PET/CT scan may help reduce the need for additional biopsies or surgical procedures, and for those patients undergoing treatment, PET/CT will help determine the treatment's effectiveness.

## Is PET/CT safe?

Yes. PET/CT provides special information about your condition in a non-invasive manner. As with any medical procedure, there is some risk involved. There is a low level of radiation exposure with the CT scan and radioactive PET tracer, however, the tracer is in the body for only a short period and has no known side effects.

## How long will the scan take?

Your visit will be approximately three hours. Typically, after you are injected with the PET tracer, there is an 80 minute resting period before the imaging begins. Your actual scan will take approximately 15-30 minutes, depending on the type of scan you are having.

## What should I expect?

Once at the imaging center, you will be asked to complete the necessary paperwork for the procedure. Be sure to bring your insurance cards, photo ID, and a list of any medications you are currently taking. Family members are welcome to come with you to your appointment, however, they will not be able to accompany you into the preparation and imaging suites.

The technologist will obtain a current height, weight, and perform a blood glucose test by gathering a few drops of blood from your finger tip. To produce the best PET/CT results your blood sugar **MUST** be below 200 (ideally, below 150) to have the exam. After reviewing your medical history and answering any questions you may have, the technologist will place an intravenous (I.V.) catheter into a vein in your arm.

You will receive an I.V. injection of a radioactive tracer (FDG), and then you will be asked to rest quietly for approximately 80 minutes. After this resting period, you will be directed to use the restroom to empty your bladder. The technologist will escort you into the scanner suite and have you lie down on the PET/CT scanner table. Your comfort is important to us; we are happy to provide a warm blanket and extra cushions to ensure your exam is as pleasant as possible. For the best image quality it is important to lie very still during the 15-30 minute scan time as the scanner table passes slowly through the gantry as it acquires several sets of images.



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## Prior to the exam

Please inform the technologist if you are:

- Pregnant or breast-feeding
- Diabetic
- Asthmatic
- Claustrophobic
- Have a latex sensitivity/allergy
- If you have had any other imaging studies performed at another location.

## After the exam

Usually, there are no restrictions to your daily routine after the test. We strongly encourage you to drink plenty of fluids throughout the day to flush the radioactive substance from your body.

## Procedure Results

A radiologist who has specialized training in PET will review and interpret the scan after the exam is completed. A final written report will be sent to your provider within 2-3 business days. After reviewing the report, your provider will discuss the results with you either at an office appointment or contact you by telephone. If you've had additional testing performed, your provider may need some additional time to coordinate all of your results to be able to provide you with a more complete medical treatment plan.

It is important that you arrive to your appointment on time.

If you need to cancel you exam please call by 4 PM the day prior to your exam. This will enable us to care for another patient, or cancel the special ordered radiotracer used in the exam.

If you have any questions prior to your exam please call:

Nursing Questions: PCI Hematology /Oncology: 319-297-2920

PET/CT Exam Questions: PCI Imaging: 319-247-3750



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