

## National PET/CT Contract

### Patient & Carer Frequently Asked Questions

#### Why am I having this test?

Your Consultant has referred you for a PET/CT scan. This test will provide important diagnostic information to help your Consultant and their team plan an appropriate treatment for you. If you have any concerns either before or after your scan, please don't hesitate to contact the team at the Patient Management Centre (PMC) on 0845 045 0103.

#### What is the difference between PET and other medical imaging tests?

Procedures such as X-Ray, CT (Computed Tomography) and MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) provide valuable information about the structure or anatomy of the tissues being examined. By giving small quantities of a radioactive injection called 18F-Fluorodeoxyglucose (similar to sugar), PET (Positron Emission Tomography) produces images showing how the cells of your body are functioning. By combining PET and CT in a single scanner, images are produced which can reveal information regarding the exact location, size, nature and extent of disease anywhere in the body with much greater detail.

#### I have already had a CT scan. Why do I need another one?

The CT performed in a PET/CT scan is used to complement the PET information. It is not used in the same way as a full CT.

#### How will my appointment be made?

Once PMC has received a completed request form from your Consultant, they will phone you to make the appointment and discuss the procedure. If time allows, an information pack will be sent to you via post. This pack will include:

- Patient PET/CT leaflet
- Appointment time
- Examination specific information
- Map and directions to scanning facility
- Contact details for advice

If time does not allow, all relevant information will be given to you by telephone, or by directing you to the Alliance Medical website <http://www.alliancemedical.co.uk>

#### How long will the test take?

This relatively simple procedure should take between 2 to 3 hours from start to finish. The actual time spent on the scanning bed is around 30 minutes, however there is at least 1 1/2 hours preparation necessary before the 'scan'. It is very important to arrive on time for your appointment. For the procedure you will be given a radioactive injection which is produced specifically for you, and has a very short shelf life (it doesn't last in your body very long). If you are late we will not be able to proceed with your scan.

*Please notify PMC immediately on 0845 045 0103 if you are going to be delayed.*

#### How do I prepare for the scan?

Unless you are told otherwise, please do not have anything to eat or drink for 6 hours prior to your appointment (except plain water, and any necessary medication). We encourage you to drink plenty of plain water both before and after your scan (approximately 4 to 5 glasses) as this helps flush the injection we give you through your body. You may continue to use the toilet as usual prior to your scan.

When you arrive at the hospital and have been checked in for your appointment you will be taken through to the patient preparation area. You may be asked to change into a gown and remove any jewellery or metallic objects (such as bras, belts, zippers). We suggest leaving any valuable items at home.

The procedure will be fully explained by our team, and they will also take a brief clinical history.



### How is the scan done - what does it involve?

You will be taken to a private, quiet area where you will be given a small injection of a radioactive liquid into a vein - usually your arm. This is similar to a blood test. Each injection is prepared on the day of the scan, specifically for your needs. This is not produced on-site at the hospital and needs to be delivered to each site on the day it is required.

After receiving the injection you will need to rest and remain lying down comfortably for approximately 1 hour while the injection is absorbed into your body. During this time it is very important that you remain rested and relaxed.

Once the injection has been absorbed, you will be given the opportunity to go to the toilet and you are then ready for your scan. In the scanning room you will be asked to lie down on your back on the scanning bed. The bed will move through the ring of the scanner and collect images for around 30 minutes, depending on the type of scan that you need. You will need to remain still for the scan however you can continue to breathe normally throughout. A member of our team will be watching your scan from the control room and if you have any concerns during the procedure you will be able to communicate with them via a two-way microphone.



### What do you mean by radioactive?

Radiation is simply a type of energy; the most familiar form of radiation is visible light (like that produced from the sun). Other forms, like X-rays and gamma rays, are used in medical imaging and provide useful tools for the diagnosis and treatment of many diseases. In PET, the amount of radiation given in an injection is just sufficient to obtain the required information and after a short time there is no trace that the test was ever done. The radiation 'decays' away soon after your scan is complete. The amount of radiation received from a PET/CT scan is comparable to that of many diagnostic X-ray and CT procedures.

### Are there any after effects?

There have been no documented side effects associated with the radioactive injection. The small amount of radioactivity involved is kept to a minimum and has a very short shelf life. It will not make you nauseous or drowsy so will not prevent you from driving to and from your appointment.

### Is sedation necessary?

Sedation will not be offered for this test and will not be available on the day of your appointment. If you have any concerns, please contact PMC on 0845 045 0103 prior to the day of your scan.

### What happens after the scan?

After the scan has been completed, you are free to change back into your clothes and leave immediately. Because a small amount of residual radioactivity will still be in your body, we recommend that you don't have close contact with pregnant women or young children for 8 hours after the scan. If you have any concerns, please contact PMC on 0845 045 0103 prior to the day of your scan. We encourage you to drink plenty of water (approximately 4 to 5 glasses), and go the toilet as usual.

Your images will be analysed by our PET/CT Specialists and a report will be sent to the doctor who requested your scan. We aim to have your results returned to the referring doctor within a week of your scan.

### What if I am Diabetic?

When PMC phones to book your appointment please confirm with them if you are diabetic. If you are diabetic, PMC will need to give you special dietary instructions to follow prior to your scan. It is important that you let our team know prior to the day of your scan if you are taking tablets, on insulin or controlling your diabetes with diet alone.

The radioactive injection is a form of sugar or glucose which allows for areas of interest to be highlighted on the scan.

Diabetes can affect the PET/CT scan in the following ways:

- If your own blood sugar level is high your body will not 'take up' as much of the injection because your own sugar will be taken up in preference. This means that the scan may not highlight areas of interest.
- If your insulin is high, this will also affect the scan results because the insulin encourages your own normal tissues and organs to take up the injection and once again the areas of interest may not be highlighted.

Because everyone's blood sugar level is so important for the scan, all patients coming for a PET/CT scan will have their blood sugar measured before the radiotracer injection is given - even people who don't have diabetes.

The blood might be taken by a fingerprick test or a drop of blood might be taken during the injection. Ideally, blood sugar level should be between 4 and 10 (millimoles per litre) before the scan. If the level is more than 12, most scanning centres would postpone the scan.

The amount of glucose you are given for the scan is not thought to affect your diabetes.

#### **What if I am above average size?**

The team will ask you for your height and weight. There are two reasons for this: the scanning beds have a weight limit and the injection we need to order is calculated on your weight. If you are above average in weight, we may need to order more.

#### **What if I am pregnant?**

It is imperative that we know before the test if you are trying to get pregnant, are pregnant or breast feeding. As the procedure involves radioactivity, your referring Consultant and the PET Specialists need to be able to ensure the need for the scan.

If you are pregnant or breast feeding, the team will need to give you special advice to follow after the procedure.

#### **What if I am undergoing cancer treatment?**

It is crucial for us to know if you are currently undergoing any Chemotherapy or Radiotherapy, if you have had therapy in the past, or if you are scheduled to start therapy. Your PET/CT appointment will need to be scheduled around your therapy dates.

#### **What if I have a pacemaker, joint replacement or cochlear or other implant?**

There is no risk involved with this test if you have any of the above. Implants or joint replacements may be identified on the scan, so it is important for our team to know your medical history. You will be asked to remove hearing aids, dentures and limb prostheses prior to the scan.

#### **Do I need to provide my medical history?**

Yes. Our team needs to fully understand your recent medical history in order for them to be able to provide a comprehensive report.

#### **Do I need to stop my medication?**

No. Unless you have been told otherwise, you can continue to take any medication that has been prescribed by your Doctor and you may take over the counter medications.

#### **What if I have reduced mobility?**

Your Consultant should indicate on the referral form if any special requirements are needed, if you are disabled or if you have reduced mobility. When PMC phones to arrange your appointment they will also ask you questions regarding your mobility. As some scans are performed on a Mobile Unit with restricted space, not all patients may be able to access the facility and you may need to be referred to a static PET Centre. This will be discussed with your referring Consultant and agreed with you.

#### **What if I am visually impaired?**

Your Consultant should indicate on the referral form if any special requirements are needed, for example if you are visually impaired. When PMC phones to arrange your appointment they will also ask you questions regarding any disabilities. Patient literature can be provided in Braille.

If you have any concerns, please contact PMC on 0845 045 0103 to discuss.

#### **What if I am hard of hearing?**

Your Consultant should indicate on the referral form if any special requirements are needed, for example if you have any disabilities in relation to your hearing. When PMC phones to arrange your appointment they will also ask you questions regarding any disabilities.

If you have any concerns, please contact PMC on 0845 045 0103 to discuss.

### **Will information be provided in other languages?**

Your Consultant should indicate on the referral form if any special requirements are needed, such as translation services.

We have enlisted the services of a professional translation agency who will be able to assist PMC in successfully arranging the PET/CT scan appointments of non-English speaking patients, ensuring the patient receives all the relevant safety checks and is provided with the appropriate information required.

Patient guides are available in the following languages (other languages are available on request):

Arabic	Hindi
Bengali	Polish
Chinese	Punjabi
Gujarati	Urdu

At the time of arranging the appointment, we will ask if you have a relative/friend who could accompany you to your appointment and provide translation services. If you are not happy for a relative/friend to accompany you, an interpreter will need to be arranged to assist on the day.

### **What if my child needs a PET/CT scan?**

Specific guidelines apply for children referred for a PET/CT scan, and the referring Consultant will also be asked to complete a Paediatric Patient Questionnaire.

Not all children (up to the age of 18) will be suitable to be scanned at their local facility and may need to be referred to a specialist static PET centre. Age, weight and ability to cope with the procedure are all taken into account.

If you have any concerns, please contact PMC on 0845 045 0103 to discuss.

### **Can I bring someone with me?**

Whilst a friend, relative or carer may accompany you to the hospital, they will not be able to accompany you into the preparation area unless they are providing translation services or there is a legal need for them to be present. They will not be able to accompany you into the scanning room. A member of our team will be watching your scan from the Control Room and if you have any concerns during the procedure you will be able to communicate with them via a two-way microphone.

We do not have access to large waiting facilities and would suggest those accompanying patients make use of the local amenities at the Hospital site.

### **Is parking available?**

Further information on local amenities can be found on the host Hospital websites or visit <http://www.alliancemedical.co.uk>

### **How do I provide feedback?**

Random selections of patients are given the opportunity to complete a Patient Satisfaction Survey (PSS) on the day of their appointment. You can also access the PSS via the website <http://www.alliancemedical.co.uk>

If you would like to speak to a member of our team directly, please contact PMC on 0845 045 0103.

### **How will I find out more information?**

Further information can be found on the Alliance Medical website <http://www.alliancemedical.co.uk>

Alternatively, please phone PMC directly on 0845 045 0103.

Watch a video of a scan at <http://www.alliancemedical.co.uk/pet-ct-video>

