



PET / CT Scan

UHN

Information for patients and families

Learn about:

- what it is
- how long it takes
- how to prepare
- what to bring to your appointment
- what happens during the scan

You are having a PET / CT Scan on:

Date: _____

Time: _____

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Come to:

The Medical Imaging Centre
Princess Margaret Hospital
620 University Avenue
3rd floor

If you have any questions or need to change or cancel your appointment, call 416-946-4501 extension 3172.

What is a PET / CT scan?

PET stands for Positron Emission Tomography. It is a type of test that takes pictures of the inside of your body. It uses a small amount of a radioactive sugar to help find certain diseases early. It can also show how well your treatment is working.

CT stands for Computed Tomography. It uses x-rays to show pictures of your bones and other parts of your body. The technologist adds the PET pictures and CT pictures together. This way, the radiologist can get a better picture of what is happening in your body. This will help the him/her decide whether there is something wrong in your body.

How long does a PET / CT scan take?

You will be in the department for 2 to 2.5 hours. It takes some time to prepare for the scan.

The scan takes about 30 minutes. It may take another 15 minutes if the technologist needs to take extra pictures.

How do I prepare?

For patients without diabetes:

For 3 days before your scan:

- Do not exercise hard. For example, you can go for a walk but do not run.

In the 6 hours before your scan:

- Do not eat anything. This includes candies or gum.
- You can drink up to 1 cup (250 mL) of water. Do not drink anything else.

Can I take medicine in these 6 hours?

- Do not take medicine that has sugar in it.
- Do not take medicine that you need to have with food.
- Keep taking all other medicines.

For patients with diabetes:

For this test to work, your blood sugar level has to be less than 10 mmol/L. If possible, it should be below 8.3 mmol/L. Check your blood sugar level often.

What if I cannot get my blood sugar below 10?

Call 416-946-4501, extension 3172 to rebook your appointment.

For 3 days before your scan:

- Do not exercise hard.
For example, you can go for a walk but do not run.

On the day of your scan:

If you take insulin, metformin, glyburide, glucophage or diamicon:

- Take it 4 or more hours before your test.
- Have a light breakfast that is high in protein and low in carbohydrates with your medicine. For example, you can have a hard boiled egg or bacon with coffee or tea. Do not put sugar, milk or cream in your coffee or tea. Do not have toast, fruit or juice.

If you do not take these medicines:

- Do not eat anything for 6 hours before your scan. Do not have candies or gum.
- You can drink up to 1 cup (250 mL) of water in the 6 hours before your scan. Do not drink anything else.

Can I take other kinds of medicine?

- Do not take medicine that has sugar in it.
- Do not take medicine that you need to have with food.
- Keep taking all other medicines.

What should I bring to the appointment?

- Your health card
- Your hospital card (if you have one)
- A list of medicines you are taking

Did you have any imaging tests in the last 3 months, like an x-ray, bone scan, MRI or CT scan?

- If you had these tests at a different hospital, bring a copy of the results with you.
- You do not need to bring results if you had the tests at Toronto General, Princess Margaret, Toronto Western, Mount Sinai or Women's College Hospital.

What happens during the scan?

1. When you arrive, the technologist will explain the test to you.

For female patients:

It is important to tell us if you are breastfeeding or if there is any chance that you are pregnant. Tell the technologist before you have the injection.

2. He/she will inject a radioactive sugar called FDG into your arm or hand with a small needle.
3. You wait in a special waiting area for 45 to 60 minutes. This gives time for the FDG to get into the cells in your body.
4. You go into the scanning room. Then you lie down on a special bed.
5. The bed moves in and out of the scanner. You need to lie still and follow the instructions the technologist gives you. The scan takes about 30 to 45 minutes.
6. When the scan is happening, the technologist will leave the room. He/she can still see you through a window and hear you through an intercom. You may hear buzzing or clicking noises from the scanner. These are normal and you do not need to worry.

What happens after the scan?

You can eat and drink normally, unless you are having another test that has special rules.