



Melbourne Theranostic Innovation Centre

PATIENT INFORMATION

POSITRON EMISSION TOMOGRAPHY PET

A Positron Emission Tomography (PET) scan produces images of how organs or tissues inside the body work.

INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

It provides information that is not available from using other scans. This information can be used to decide the best treatment for managing your cancer. PET scanning can also be used to monitor the effectiveness of treatment and to help plan for surgery and radiation therapy. The scanner looks very similar to a CT scanner and is open at both ends.

WHAT WILL THE PROCEDURE INVOLVE?

- A small amount of radioactive solution (radiotracer) will be injected into a vein in your hand or arm. The most common radiotracer is 18F-FDG (FDG), which is a sugar compound.
- After this injection, you will need to rest quietly in a bed or recliner chair for at least 60 minutes, while the radiotracer travels through the body. It is important that you lie still during the resting period to prevent muscles from taking up the radiotracer. You can watch TV or listen to music whilst you rest, but you cannot read a magazine or book.
- Following the resting period, the PET scan will begin. You will lie on the scanning bed, which moves slowly through the scanner. The PET scanner will detect the radiation released from the injection and will use this to create pictures of the inside of your body. The scan will take around **5 minutes**, depending on the area of the body being scanned. You will need to lie as still as possible, to help the technologist obtain good quality images.
- If you usually experience pain when lying down for similar periods, we ask that you bring your pain-relief medication with you.
- Most patients spend approximately 2 to 3 hours at MTIC for the appointment. Please consider this when parking your car.

ARE THERE ANY RADIATION RISKS?

The PET scan is a very safe and routine procedure. Millions of PET scans have been done around the world without complications. The amount of radiation that is administered is a small amount and will be passed out of the body in urine. By the end of the day almost all of the radioactive sugar will be out of your body. There is no need to distance or isolate yourself from other people.

DO YOU HAVE CLAUSTROPHOBIA?

Most patients with claustrophobia find this test quite easy. However, if you think you may need any medication to help you go through the scanner, please call to discuss your requirements prior to your appointment. If medication is used, then you will need someone to accompany you home after the scan.

WILL THERE BE ANY SIDE EFFECTS?

There are no side effects associated with a PET scan. You will be able to eat and resume normal activities as soon as the scan is complete.

ARE YOU PREGNANT OR BREAST FEEDING?

All PET scans use a small amount of radioactivity, so try to avoid bringing young children or pregnant women with you to this appointment. If you are breast feeding or think you may be pregnant, please contact our department to discuss your situation.

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WHEN WILL THE RESULTS BE AVAILABLE?

PET scan results will be provided to your referring doctor within 1 or 2 working days. You will need to make an appointment with your referring doctor to discuss the results of your scan.

ARE ALL PET SCANS FUNDED BY MEDICARE?

Unfortunately, not all PET scans are funded through Medicare. If your PET scan is not covered by Medicare, we will advise you of any costs at the time of booking your scan. Please call us if you have any questions about the cost of your scan.

WHAT PREPARATION IS REQUIRED FOR AN FDG PET SCAN?

- Generally, you will need to fast for several hours before the PET scan. This means no eating any food or drinking any liquids containing sugars.
- It is ok to drink plain water during this time and we recommend you drink at least 500mls of water before you arrive for your appointment. Your appointment letter will give specific instructions about when to begin your fast.
- If you have diabetes, please call and inform the MTIC as some diabetic medications may affect the PET scan.
- Dress in warm, comfortable clothing.
- Please avoid wearing metal items like zips or studs.



CONTACT INFORMATION

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