



PET: positron emission tomography

What is a PET scan?

A positron emission tomography (PET) scan is an imaging test that helps reveal how your tissues and organs are functioning. A PET scan uses a radioactive drug (tracer) to show this activity.

How does a PET/CT Scan work?

During a PET scan, two medical images are captured with one machine at the same time - a PET image and a CT image. The PET image shows the physician how the body is functioning and reveals areas of abnormal activity. The CT image shows the physician the body's anatomic structure, acting as a map to precisely locate any areas of concern. The images are combined to reveal the complete picture to the physician.

To better understand how a PET scan works, think about a satellite weather map seen on the local news. The map displays weather patterns gathered by satellites that show storm intensities. With one image on top of the other, we can see what areas are being affected by adverse weather.

Instructions for exam

- If you are an insulin diabetic patient, please make sure your appointment is early in the morning. If you are an oral diabetic patient, please make sure your appointment is after 11:00 am. If necessary, please contact us to reschedule for another appointment time. Additional instructions will be given to you by the technologist.
- Do not eat or drink anything except water and most medications (except for diabetes medications, cough drops, cough syrup or any liquid, magic mouthwash, chewable medications) for at least 4 hours before your appointment. This includes mints, chewing gum, chewing tobacco.

- Please drink 3-4 glasses of water prior to arrival. 20 ounces total.
Use the restroom as necessary.
- You must avoid exercise during the 24 hours prior to the study.
- If you are breastfeeding, plan to use previously pumped milk or formula as a substitute for 24 hours after the study.
- You can take your usual medications (except those for diabetes, cough drops, cough syrup or any liquid, magic mouthwash, chewable medications), but please let us know what those medications are.
- If you have had chemotherapy, neupogen, neulasta injections, or radiation therapy within the past month please let us know.
- Report any medication allergies to the technologist.
- Please drink plenty of fluids after your exam is completed.
- Pregnant women and small children should not accompany patients. Patients should avoid contact with pregnant women and small children for a few hours after the scan if possible.

Results

A radiologist will review your exam images and report the findings to your doctor within 24 hours. Your doctor will then discuss the findings and next steps with you.