

Positron Emission Tomography (PET/CT) Scan

The PET/CT is a scan that shows the size, shape and position of the organs. This test provides more detail than other scans, X-rays, or more invasive testing. The test takes about 2 hours and involves the use of radioactive sugar that has no side effects

*If you have
any questions
about the scan,
please call
312-926-3762.*

The PET/CT scan:

- Shows how well certain organs are working.
- Helps detect conditions/problems early on.

In addition, it helps your doctor monitor:

- Changes in existing conditions.
- Your response to treatment.

This brochure provides important information about how to prepare for and what to expect during your scan.

Please give us at least 24 hours' notice if you need to change or cancel your appointment at 312-926-3762.

Before your Scan

If you have had a recent MRI or CT at another hospital, please plan to bring the disc or report to your appointment. The Nuclear Medicine doctor will compare those tests with your PET/CT scan. Your PET/CT scan final report may be delayed if you do not bring these reports before your scan.

Please tell us if you are taking steroids, such as Prednisone® or Decadron®. These medicines may raise your blood sugar too high to do the scan.

Talk to the doctor who ordered the exam if you have

- A history of anxiety.
- Claustrophobia (fear of being closed in).
- Pain while lying down.

If so, your doctor may prescribe medicine to make you more comfortable during the scan. Please be sure to bring that medicine with you. You will be able to take it before the test. If you take medicine to relax, you will need a responsible adult to take you home after the scan.

If you are Diabetic:

Before having this test, it is important that your blood sugar be well controlled. Your blood sugar must be less than 150mg/dL for the test to be done. If you take medications for your diabetes:

- You may take diabetic pills the morning of your scan with plain water.
- Do not take insulin within 4 hours of your appointment.

If you have questions, please call the Nuclear Medicine Department at 312-926-3016.

At Home:

- Do not exercise or do any strenuous activity for 24 hours before your scan.
- Do not eat or drink 4 hours before your scan. This includes food, flavored water, chewing gum and mints. You may have plain water.
- Plan to wear or bring comfortable clothing with no metal closures or detail (such as metal zippers or snaps.)

Please plan to arrive 15 minutes before your appointment time. Be sure to bring:

- Your doctor's written order for the test if one was given to you.
- A list of allergies.
- A list of all your current medications (prescription, over-the-counter, and herbals).
- Photo ID.
- Medical insurance information.
- Medicare card (Medicare patients only).

Arrival

Please come to Nuclear Medicine department, 8th floor in Northwestern Memorial Hospital's Galter Pavilion, 251 East Huron Street.

Parking is available for patients and visitors in the garage at 222 East Huron, across from the Feinberg and Galter Pavilions. For discounted rates, please bring your parking ticket with you. Tickets can be validated at the customer service desks on the 1st and 2nd floor of the Feinberg and Galter Pavilions.

You will need to remove any loose or hanging jewelry, such as necklaces, rings or watches. You will need to remove coins or any other metal objects you might have in your pockets.

Before the scan:

Our staff will check your blood sugar by pricking your finger. Your blood sugar will need to be well controlled and less than 150 mg/dL for the scan to be done.

Please let the staff know if you:

- Think you might be pregnant.
- Are currently breastfeeding.

Special guidelines may need to be followed before the scan.

Our staff will place an IV (into the vein line) into your arm or hand. A small dose of radioactive sugar is injected into your IV. There are no known side effects to this. While your body absorbs the injected fluid, you will rest quietly in a recliner for 60 minutes. You may watch TV, listen to music, or read.

During the Exam

Once you are in the exam room, our staff will help you lay on a table connected to the PET/CT machine. You will need to lay on your back with your arms over your head (if you are able). For about the next 15 to 45 minutes, the PET/CT machine will take a series of “pictures.” It is important that you are able to lay still during this time.

This entire exam takes about 2 hours.

After the Exam

You will need a responsible adult to take you home if you have taken medicines for pain or to relax you. You may leave as soon as the scan is complete. Resume your normal diet and activities after the scan unless the doctor here tells you otherwise.

The Nuclear Medicine doctor (radiologist) will review your scan and send a report to your doctor within 48 hours.

If you have any questions about the scan, please call the Nuclear Medicine department at 312-926-3762.

Health Information Resources

For more information, visit Northwestern Memorial Hospital’s Alberto Culver Health Learning Center. This state-of-the-art health library is located on the 3rd floor of the Galter Pavilion. Health information professionals are available to help you find the information you need and provide you with personalized support at no charge. You may contact the Health Learning Center by calling 312-926-LINK (5465) or by sending an e-mail to hlc@nm.org.

For additional information about Northwestern Medicine, please visit our website at nm.org.

Para asistencia en español, por favor llamar al Departamento de Representantes para Pacientes al 312-926-3112.

The entities that come together as Northwestern Medicine are committed to representing the communities we serve, fostering a culture of inclusion, delivering culturally competent care, providing access to treatment and programs in a nondiscriminatory manner and eliminating healthcare disparities. For questions, please call either Northwestern Memorial Hospital’s Patient Representatives Department at 312-926-3112, TDD/TTY 312-926-6363 and/or the Northwestern Medical Group Patient Representatives Department at 312-695-1100, TDD/TTY 312-695-3661.

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For additional information about Northwestern Medicine, please visit our website at nm.org.
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