

Positron Emission Tomography (PET/CT) Scan

A positron emission tomography/computed tomography (PET/CT) scan is an imaging exam. It shows how your organs and tissues are behaving. The test can often detect abnormal tissue metabolism caused by a disease before the disease can be seen on other imaging tests, such as CT or magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scans. This test uses a radioactive solution (tracer) to show metabolic activity throughout your body. The radioactive tracer does not cause an allergic reaction.

If you have any questions
about the scan, please call
312.926.3762.

It also helps your physician monitor:

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

This brochure will help you learn how to prepare for and what to expect during your scan.

Please call us at 312.926.3762 (TTY: 711) at least 24 hours in advance if you need to change or cancel your appointment.

To prepare for your scan

Follow the instructions sent to you in your MyNM patient portal.

Tell your physician about all the medications you are taking. Some medications may interfere with the test. They will let you know if you need to adjust or stop taking any medications before the test.



Let them know if you have:

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

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

FDG PET scan

An FDG PET scan uses a radioactive sugar known as FDG to detect some conditions and diseases. If you are scheduled for a PET scan with FDG you will get special instructions including:

- › Do not eat or drink anything for 4 hours before your scheduled arrival.
- › Do not exercise within 24 hours of your scheduled arrival.

If you have diabetes, follow these instructions before your scheduled FDG PET scan:

- › You will need to arrive with a blood sugar less than 200 milligrams (mg)/dL.
- › Withhold insulin for 4 hours before the scan.
- › You can take oral hypoglycemic medications such as metformin (Glucophage®) as usual.
- › If you have an insulin pump, do not bolus insulin for at least 4 hours before the scan, but leave the pump at its basal insulin rate.

Arrival

Wear or bring comfortable clothing with no metal details or closures such as metal zippers or snaps.

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

- › Your physician's written order for the test if one was given to you
- › A list of your allergies

- › A list of all your current medications (prescription, over-the-counter and herbal)
- › Photo ID
- › Medical insurance information
- › Medicare card (Medicare patients only)

Please come to your appointment location. Check your MyNM patient portal for details.

Parking is available for patients and visitors in the garage at 222 East Huron Street, across from Feinberg and Galter pavilions. For a discounted rate, bring your parking ticket with you. You can validate your ticket at the Customer Service Desk on the 1st or 2nd floor of 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

Please let the staff know if you think you might be pregnant or are breastfeeding. If so, we may need to follow special guidelines before the scan.

Our staff will place an IV (into the vein) line in your arm or hand. A tech will inject a small dose of the radioactive tracer 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 scan

Once you are in the exam room, our staff will help you lie down on a table connected to the PET/CT machine. You will need to lie on your back. For about the next 15 to 45 minutes, the PET/CT machine will take a series of “pictures.” You must lie still during this time.

This entire visit takes about 2 hours.



After the scan

You will need a responsible adult to take you home if you have taken medication for pain or to relax you. You may leave as soon as the scan is complete. You can go back to your normal diet and activities after the scan unless your physician tells you otherwise.

The nuclear medication physician (radiologist) will review your scan and send a report to your physician within 72 hours.

If you have any questions about the scan, please call the Nuclear Medicine Department at 312.926.3762 (TTY: 711).

For more information about Northwestern Medicine, please visit our website at [nm.org](https://www.nm.org).