

PET/CT Imaging



Information for patients

Your doctor has referred you for a positron emission tomography–computed tomography (PET/CT) scan. This leaflet explains what happens during the test, which you will have in the Nuclear Medicine & PET-CT Department at King's College Hospital.

Confirming your identity

Before you have a treatment or procedure, our staff will ask you your **name** and **date of birth** and check your **ID band**. If you don't have an ID band we will also ask you to confirm your address.

If we don't ask these questions, then please ask us to check.

Ensuring your safety is our primary concern.

Why do I need a PET/CT scan?

It will help your doctor to diagnose your condition and plan your treatment.

What is a PET/CT scan?

A PET (Positron Emission Tomography) scan involves the injection of a radioactive tracer to provide information about the function of organs and tissues within the body.

A CT (Computed Tomography) scan uses x-rays to produce detailed 3D images of the inside of the body.

PET/CT combines these two types of imaging into one scan to help identify organs or tissues that are not working normally. These images allow your doctor to plan an appropriate treatment for you.

How should I prepare for the scan?

Have **nothing** to eat for **6 hours** prior to your appointment time (this includes chewing gum). During this time try to drink plenty of **plain** water (no tea, coffee or juices etc).

Please note that failure to keep to this fast can cause inaccurate scan results and your appointment will have to be rescheduled.

Avoid any strenuous physical activity for 24 hours prior to your appointment time e.g. running, cycling and exercising in a gym.

What should I wear?

You do not normally need to take off your clothes. We suggest that you wear something warm, loose and comfortable. Since part of the examination includes a CT scan, it is important that you are not wearing any metal during the scan, for example: jewellery, watches, zips, bra underwire and hooks, as metal can interfere with the scan.



Do I need to stop taking any other medications?

Continue to take any prescribed medications as usual, unless instructed otherwise in your appointment letter.

If you are a **diabetic patient**, please contact the department **prior to your appointment** for specific instructions on preparing for your scan.

What happens on the day of your scan?

When you arrive for your appointment the procedure will be fully explained by our staff.

A needle will be inserted into a vein in your arm or hand, through which a small amount of a radioactive substance will be injected.



You will need to rest for an hour before having your scan. This is known as the 'uptake period' and allows time for the body to take up the radioactive tracer. During this time it is important that you lie still and relax quietly. You should not read, use a mobile phone or listen to music during this time.

After the uptake period you will be directed to the scanner room and asked to lie on your back on the scanner couch. The scan will take approximately 30 minutes and you will need to lie still with your arms placed above your head. If you have problem with it let us know before start your scan.

You can go home after the scan.



How long does the scan take?

Please allow between 2 - 3 hours for your appointment. This will include both preparation and scanning time.

Who will do the test?

A clinical Technologist or a radiographer will do your scan. They have a specialist training in PET/CT.

What are the risks?

Radiation Dose: The scan will involve x-ray exposure and the injection of a radioactive tracer that releases gamma rays, which are a form of radiation similar to x-rays. We use as little radiation as possible and the radioactive tracer will remain in your body for just a few hours after injection.

Please remember; your doctor would not recommend this scan if the risks were not far outweighed by the potential benefits of the test. Please ask a member of staff if you have any concerns or require more information.

Pregnancy and breast feeding: If you are (or think you may be) pregnant or are breast feeding **please contact us in advance.**

PET-CT is not recommended if you are pregnant as there may be a risk to your baby.

Breast feeding should be discontinued for 6 hours following the scan. It is recommended that you avoid close contact with your baby during this time.

Will it hurt?

The only thing that may hurt a little is the prick of the needle when you have the injection. If you have had a blood test you will find this



very similar. You should not feel any ill effects from the injection and it will not make you feel sleepy.

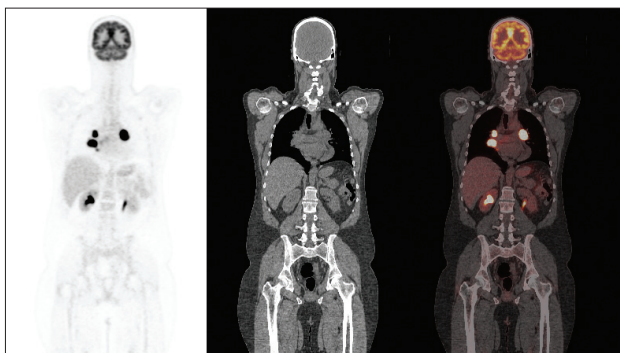
What happens after my scan?

You may eat and drink as normal. Try to drink plenty of fluids for the remainder of the day and empty your bladder regularly.

Please avoid close contact with young children and pregnant women for 6 hours after your scan.

What happens to the results?

We send the report and the pictures to the doctor who asked for the scan. The doctor will explain the results and the treatment they recommend at your next appointment.



Can I bring a friend or relative with me?

We welcome this, but please do not bring children or pregnant women with you. Your friend or relative will be asked to sit in a separate waiting room. But due to space please do not bring more than one person with you.

Are there any alternatives?

PET/CT gives us unique information and is the best test to find out about certain conditions. You may also be offered other tests that show other information like a Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) scan.



Who do I contact if I cannot come to my appointment?

Contact Nuclear Medicine as soon as possible to make another appointment on 020 3299 3153 or kch-tr.nucmedreferral@nhs.net

Nuclear Medicine & PET-CT Department

Location:

Lower Ground Floor
Golden Jubilee Wing
King's College Hospital
Denmark Hill
London SE5 9RS

Opening Hours:

Mon to Fri: 9am – 5pm
Sat/Sun: Closed

Sharing your information

We have teamed up with Guy's and St Thomas' Hospitals in a partnership known as King's Health Partners Academic Health Sciences Centre. We are working together to give our patients the best possible care, so you might find we invite you for appointments at Guy's or St Thomas'. To make sure everyone you meet always has the most up-to-date information about your health, we may share information about you between the hospitals.

Care provided by students

We provide clinical training where our students get practical experience by treating patients. Please tell your doctor or nurse if you do not want students to be involved in your care. Your treatment will not be affected by your decision.



PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) is a service that offers support, information and assistance to patients, relatives and visitors. They can also provide help and advice if you have a concern or complaint that staff have not been able to resolve for you. The PALS office is located on the ground floor of the Hambleden Wing, near the main entrance on Bessemer Road - staff will be happy to direct you.

PALS at King's College Hospital, Denmark Hill, London SE5 9RS

Tel: **020 3299 3601**

Email: **kch-tr.pals@nhs.net**

You can also contact us by using our online form at

www.kch.nhs.uk/contact/pals

If you would like the information in this leaflet in a different language or format, please contact PALS on 020 3299 1844.



