

What is PET?

Your physician has ordered a Positron Emission Tomography (PET) scan for you. PET images can provide information about many conditions affecting the heart, brain, and other organs including evaluating possible neoplasms, which will help your doctor plan appropriate treatment for you.

PET images are different than those images from more conventional radiology studies such as X-Ray, CT, Ultrasound or MRI. These routine radiology procedures show what the tissue look like by making pictures of the different organ structures.

At the University of Chicago, we perform PET with a form of CT ("PET/CT") which increases the speed and accuracy of the exam. The PET images themselves contain information about the body's chemistry, cell function and exact location of disease. They display unique information about the physiology of organ systems. PET combined with the CT gives your doctor more powerful information that can affect your care.

Can I Eat or Drink Before My Scan?

This will depend on the type of study, but typically, you will be asked not to eat any food or drink anything except water for at least four hours before your scan.

How Much Time Should I Allow?

You can expect to be in the PET center for one and a half to three hours. The actual scan itself takes far less time.

What Does My Procedure Involve?

To begin the procedure, a small amount of radioactive glucose is injected into your bloodstream through a small IV started by the technologist.

There is no danger to you from this injection. Glucose (also known as sugar) is a common substance every cell in your body needs in order to function. The radiation exposure associated with PET is similar to a conventional CT scan.

After the injection, you will wait approximately an hour, while the injected glucose is distributed throughout your body.

Then you will be asked to lie on a table that passes slowly through the scanner. The scanner resembles a CT scanner, but has a much larger opening. Some people fall asleep during the scan. The scanner makes very little noise, does not use IV "dye" or cause "warm" sensations.

What Should I Do To Prepare?

For your comfort and peace of mind, please be sure to:

- Tell your doctor if you are pregnant, think you may be pregnant or if you are a nursing mother.
- Wear comfortable clothing in layers.
- Tell your doctor and technologist if you are **diabetic**.
- Wear your hearing aid, glasses and dentures to the PET center. Leave all other valuables at home.

- Take any prescribed medications on the day of your test unless instructed differently by your doctor.
- Do not eat for at least four hours before your scan.
- Avoid all beverages except water for at least four hours before your scan.

How Will I Feel Afterward?

You will be able to perform normal activities after your scan. There are no side-effects from the injected radioactive glucose.

Will Insurance Pay for my PET?

Medicare and other insurance carriers will reimburse PET for select clinical indications. Most private insurance carriers require pre-certification before the exam can be provided. Verify coverage for your PET prior to having the services rendered.

**Contact the University of Chicago
Hospitals PET Center at
(773) 702-0336 if additional questions**

