

PET/CT SCAN

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT IS A PET/CT SCAN?

A PET/CT imaging system blends two essential and complementary medical imaging technologies into one life-changing scanner. The system has the unique ability to capture two types of medical images with one machine — computed tomography (CT) and positron emission tomography (PET) at the same time. The system combines the two images into one single image and presents combined results to aid doctors in making treatment decisions.

On the CT image, the doctor sees the body's anatomic structure. On the PET image, the doctor sees how the body is functioning. When combined into a PET/CT image, the patient's complete picture is revealed. Because the two imaging technologies are merged into one scanner, doctors gain exceptional images that would normally take two scanners twice the time to accomplish. During the exam, the images mesh perfectly.

WHAT SHOULD I DO TO PREPARE?

Someone from the Imaging Center will contact you two to three days prior to your test to confirm your appointment and answer any questions you may have. For your comfort and peace of mind, however, please be sure to follow these instructions:

- Tell your doctor if you are pregnant or think you may be pregnant, or if you are a nursing mother
- Wear comfortable clothes – elastic waist, no metal
- If you are a diabetic, you may need to follow special guidelines, such as taking a reduced dose of insulin on the morning of the scan; please call for special instructions regarding your diet and medications

- Wear your hearing aid, glasses or dentures to the Center
 - Do not eat or drink anything – including breath mints, cough drops, or gum (even sugar-free) – except water for six hours before your exam because it will interfere with the results
 - Take any prescribed medications on the day of your test unless instructed not to do so
 - No strenuous activity or exercise 24 hours prior to the exam
 - Drink two glasses of water before coming to the Center for your scan
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WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT WHEN I ARRIVE?

For the PET portion of the exam, a small amount of radioactive glucose will be injected into your bloodstream. 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. Radioactive glucose loses its radioactivity very quickly and only very small amounts are injected. In all cases, little or no radioactivity will remain in your body eight hours after injection.

After the injection, you will be asked to wait approximately one hour while the injected material is distributed throughout your body. During this time, you will be placed in a quiet room, alone so that you may relax.

HOW LONG WILL ALL OF THIS TAKE?

The PET/CT scan should last between 20 and 45 minutes. You should plan to spend approximately two hours for the entire process.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE EXAM?

You may leave as soon as the exam is complete. Unless you received special instructions, you will be able to eat and drink immediately. In the meantime, we will begin preparing the results for review by our radiologist. The results will be forwarded to your doctor, who will tell you what we learned.

SAFETY OF PET/CT EXAMS

Be assured that the PET/CT exam is a safe and effective diagnostic procedure. The radioactive glucose used in PET does not remain in your system long, so there is no reason to avoid interacting with other people once you leave. To be extra safe, wait a few hours before getting too close to an infant or a pregnant woman.

DIETARY INSTRUCTIONS

Patients with special dietary requirements, such as those with diabetes or high cholesterol, should check with their doctor before making changes to their diet.

The quality of your PET/CT is greatly affected by the level of sugar in your body. As a result, the diet you eat the day before makes a significant difference in the quality of the pictures we can get. Please follow this suggested diet as closely as possible to ensure the best scan possible.

It is recommended that you follow a high protein, low carbohydrate diet the evening before the scan.

PLEASE AVOID HIGH CARBOHYDRATE AND STARCHY FOODS SUCH AS:

- Potatoes, pasta, rice, bread, chips, grits, oatmeal
 - Milk, cream, cream substitutes, ice cream, cheese yogurt, whipped cream, dips, non-clear salad dressings
 - Diet dairy products, instant breakfast drinks
 - Fruits and fruit juices
 - Sugar, candy, breath mints, gum – including sugar-free varieties
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HIGH PROTEIN FOOD OPTIONS INCLUDE:

- Baked or grilled steak, pork loin, corned beef or ham

- Baked or grilled chicken or turkey
 - Baked or grilled fish
 - Grilled or boiled shrimp, lobster or crab
 - Eggs
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VEGETABLE OPTIONS INCLUDE:

- Asparagus, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, celery, cucumber, lettuce, mushrooms, onions, olives, radishes, spinach, tomatoes, turnips
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SAMPLE MENUS

DINNER

To eat the night before your PET/CT scan

Grilled fish

Steamed broccoli

Tomato and cucumber salad with non-creamy Italian dressing

Water

BREAKFAST

To eat the morning of your PET/CT scan

**Remember to not eat any food
within six hours before your scan**

Bacon and/or sausage

Eggs (any style)

Coffee (no sugar and no creamer)

Water

REMEMBER TO:

- Drink plenty of water

- Not eat or drink anything – including breath mints, cough drops or gum (even sugar-free) – except water for six hours before your exam
- Avoid high carbohydrate and starchy foods

APPOINTMENT AND CANCELLATION

Patient's Name: _____

PET/CT Scan injection is scheduled for _____ a.m./p.m. on
_____ (date).

Please make every effort to keep your scheduled appointment. Report to Center on time and plan for unforeseen delays.

You must notify Mary Bird Perkins Cancer Center before 3 p.m. the day prior to your appointment if you need to change your appointment day or time.

For questions or cancellations, call the nurse at Mary Bird Perkins Cancer Center:

Hammond: (985) 542-5000
Gonzales: (225) 644-1205
Baton Rouge: (225) 767-0847
Covington: (985) 875-2234
Houma: (985) 876-9045