

Mass General Imaging PET/CT

PREPARING FOR YOUR PET/CT SCAN

Medications

It is important for you to keep to your regular medication schedule unless your physician informs you otherwise - just let our staff know what medications you have taken prior to your scan.

Food and Drink

You must fast for six hours prior to your PET CT scan. If you are a diabetic, you may eat four hours prior to appointment. If you take medications drink only enough water to take them. We will try to schedule your scan to make this fast and as easy as possible for you.

When To Arrive

All patients are required to check in and register for the exam in the Blake 290 (CT) Reception Area ([Download PDF Map](#)). You should arrive 30 minutes prior to your scheduled exam time. This allows time for you to have all your questions answered before the scan and for I.V. placement. After registration and I.V. placement, patient will be escorted to the PET/CT area.

What To Bring

Please bring your insurance cards and any insurance forms with you. If you have had previous MRI or CT scans of the area to be scanned, and they were not done at Mass General Hospital, please plan to bring them with you.

NOTE: All patients who do not have an MGH blue card - Please call toll free **(877) 726-9090** from 8:00AM to 8:00PM to obtain one.

What To Wear

You should dress in comfortable clothing. PET/CT patients will need to change clothing; PET patients do not have to change clothing. If you are wearing jewelry or anything else that might interfere with your scan, we will ask you to remove it. The PET/CT scan is conducted in a very secure environment. It is best, however, if you leave valuable items at home.

WHAT HAPPENS DURING THE SCAN

Prior to the FDG injection, the technologist will check patient's glucose level.

The FDG Tracer

To begin your scan, the technologist will inject a safe, low dose of short-lived positron- emitting isotopes in a glucose compound (FDG or F-18 fluorodeoxyglucose) in a vein in your arm. You will then have a seat in the waiting room while the FDG tracer disperses throughout your body. This process usually takes about 30 minutes if you are having a brain scan and about 60 minutes if you are having a body scan.

Scanning

Your technologist will then bring you into the PET/CT scan room where you will lie down on the imaging table. The technologist will position the part of your body to be scanned. The PET/CT camera does not touch you, nor do you feel anything. The technologist leaves the room, but can see you at all times from the observation window in the adjoining room. You are also in voice communication throughout the course of the scan. In order to position you correctly for the PET/CT camera, you will feel the patient table move slightly 5 or 6 times during the scan. It is important for you to lie as still as possible. If you are having a brain scan, we make and custom fit a lightweight mask to help keep your head still. If you like, you may listen to music while the scan is being done.

Length of Scan

The actual scanning time varies with the type scan you are having. On average, a brain scan takes 30 minutes; a body scan 60 minutes. Please plan on being at Mass General Hospital a total of two and one-half hours. This allows ample time for your questions and takes into account the wait for the FDG tracer to disperse throughout your body.

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WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE SCAN

After The Scan

You have no restrictions after a PET/CT scan and can go about your normal activities. To help eliminate the FDG tracer from your body, drink plenty of fluids. Since you have fasted for six hours, you should eat something right after the scan.

Results

Rapid results are essential not only for your peace-of-mind, but also for your physician to begin planning your treatment immediately. Massachusetts General Hospital radiologists read your scan immediately. The results are usually available next day and forwarded to your physician who will discuss them with you.