



Mater Misericordiae University Hospital

Preparing for your Brain 'Spect' Scan

What is a 'Brain SPECT Scan'?

In Nuclear Medicine we use an injection of a small amount of radioactivity to get more information about certain parts of your body. A brain 'SPECT' scan gives your doctor more information about your illness, which cannot be seen on other scans you may have had done.

What will your scan involve?

Firstly, when you arrive at the department the whole procedure will be explained to you and any questions you will be answered. A radiographer will then give you an injection in a vein in the arm. This injection should have no side effects (such as making you sleepy). The injection travels into the blood stream and collects in a certain parts of the brain, however, it will take at least 30-60mins for the required amount to get there. At this stage you will be asked to remain in the department and to try relaxing as much as possible. You will be then be asked to lie on a bed and a special camera will rotate around your head but will never touch you, this takes about 30-40mins.

Is there any preparation before this scan?

There is no preparation for this scan. If it is necessary for you to stop taking any medication you will be contacted prior to your scan. You do **not** need to fast for this scan.

What about after the scan?

After the scan you will be well enough to go home or back to work. It is recommended that you minimise the time you spend in close contact (within 2 meters) with small children and pregnant women for the 24 hours following the injection, to avoid unnecessarily exposing them to very small amounts of radiation.

Please do not bring small children to the department with you, however, you are quite welcome to bring an adult companion to the department as long as they are definitely not pregnant or trying for a baby.

How much radiation will I get?

Firstly, it is very important to know that you will only receive a very small amount of radiation. We are all exposed to natural background radiation during our lives. The radiation dose from this scan is similar to that which you would receive from the environment over a period of 1-2 years. The benefits to you having this scan outweigh any possible radiation risks.

Do I need to bring anything with me?

Don't forget to bring your appointment card if your doctor gave you one. Although every effort is made to keep to the appointed times, unforeseeable events may cause delays and therefore a magazine/book may be useful. We do have to wait till you arrive before we can prepare the injection so please be patient and on time!



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How soon will I get the results?

A doctor in Nuclear Medicine analyses your scan and writes a report, which is then sent to your doctor. Your doctor should then have the results within the next 7-10 days or else at the time of your next appointment.

When you come for your scan you will first need to go to the X-ray department.

LADIES

It is very important that we avoid carrying out this examination if you are pregnant or think you might be pregnant. If this is the case, please contact us in advance. When you arrive for your scan you will be asked for the date of the first day of your last period. If your period is overdue, your appointment date may be re-arranged.