

Nuclear Medicine

Your Brain Scan

Your doctor would like you to have a Nuclear Medicine Brain scan and has arranged for you to visit our department. We would like your visit to be as pleasant as possible and hope this leaflet will answer some of the questions you may have.

WHAT IS A BRAIN SCAN?

A brain scan looks at the blood flow within your brain. A small amount of radioactivity is used to obtain pictures of your brain and these will help your doctor understand your illness.

IS THE SCAN SAFE?

Yes. We will ensure that the amount of radiation you receive is as small as possible. The radioactivity leaves the body very quickly and it will not make you feel sick or sleepy.

DO I NEED TO PREPARE FOR THE SCAN?

No, you do not need to do anything special. You can eat and drink normally and keep taking your tablets.

WHAT IS INVOLVED?

Shortly after you arrive you will be given a small injection in your arm. The injection contains a small amount of radioactivity, but is harmless with no side effects. Once you have had your injection, if you need to go to the toilet, you will need to use our special patient toilet – please ask at reception for the door code. It's important that you sit down while using this toilet.

A short time later you will be scanned with a special camera for about 45 minutes.

HOW IS THE SCAN PERFORMED?

The scan involves taking pictures while you lie on a bed. The camera will rotate around your head. No discomfort is involved. You will not normally need to remove any clothing. The camera is quite open and quiet and patients do not normally feel claustrophobic.

IS THERE ANYTHING I SHOULD TELL THE STAFF BEFORE THE SCAN?

Would women please tell us if you are pregnant or if you think you may be pregnant. Also, please inform us if you are breast-feeding. Women between the ages of 12 and 55 will be asked to sign a form on the day of their test to confirm they are not pregnant. If there is any doubt, we are legally obliged to perform a pregnancy test before proceeding.

As some of the radioactive tracer will pass out in your urine, please tell us if you suffer at all from incontinence before you come for your scan.

Please tell the staff if you are planning to travel abroad within one week of your scan.

IS THERE ANYTHING SPECIAL I SHOULD KNOW?

As the material for your scan is very expensive and to keep delays to a minimum, please telephone the department on 0845 1558202 to confirm that you will be attending.

WHAT CAN I DO AFTER THE SCAN?

You can go home or to work. You can drive a car, eat and drink normally and continue taking your tablets.

WHAT HAPPENS TO THE RESULTS?

We cannot give you the results of your test. We will send a report to the doctor who asked for the scan as soon as possible. They will arrange your follow-up appointment.