

Nuclear Medicine

DaTSCAN (Brain) Study

This leaflet will help you get ready for your visit to the Nuclear Medicine Department. Please read the information and call us if you have any questions. We are happy to help.

What is a DaTSCAN?

A DaTSCAN looks at how dopamine transporters work in your brain. Dopamine is a chemical that helps control your movement. This test is often used to help doctors tell the difference between Parkinson's disease and other causes of tremor or difficulties with movement.

Please call the department when you get this letter to let us know you can come to your appointment. We can then order the injection needed for your test. If you do not confirm, your appointment will be cancelled.

Telephone: 024 7696 8212

Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm

Please call us as soon as possible if:

- You have had a urinary tract infection in the last 3 months
- You are pregnant or think you might be pregnant
- You are breastfeeding
- You need any special help



Patient Information

- You will be using ambulance transport for your appointment, and it is after midday
- You don't live in your own private home, like a care home

How should you prepare?

- Let us know what medication you are taking, as you might need to stop it for a short time before your test.
- You can eat and drink as usual for this test.

Please plan to be at this appointment for 6 hours.

What will happen when you come for the test?

When you arrive, we will give you two small tablets to take with some water. We will also give you two more tablets to take home, which you need to take the morning after your test. These tablets help stop some of the radioactivity being taken up by your thyroid gland.

About 45 minutes later, you will be given a small injection of radioactive tracer into a vein in your arm or hand.

After the injection, you will need to wait for 3 to 5 hours before the pictures can be taken. This is to make sure the injection has been taken up by the brain.

During this time, you can leave the department, or stay in the waiting room, whichever you prefer. We will tell you when to come back for your pictures. You might want to bring something to eat with you, depending on the time of your appointment.

For the rest of the day, you should drink plenty of fluids and empty your bladder often, unless your doctor has told you to limit your fluid intake.

After you get the injection, try to keep time spent close to small children and pregnant people to as short as possible for the rest of the day. You can still take care of children and give them essential love and care.

Patient Information

It is very unlikely that you will feel any side-effects after the scan, but if you do, please let us know.

What happens when the pictures are taken?

The pictures are taken by a special machine called a gamma camera. You will need to lie on your back on the imaging couch, while two camera detectors will come close to your head and will slowly take pictures of your brain at different angles as they rotate around your head. The pictures take between 30 to 45 minutes, and you should keep as still as you can during this time. A member of staff can see you throughout the scan.

What happens after the scan?

You will be asked to wait for a few minutes whilst your images are checked. We will tell you when this is complete, and you can leave. Please note we cannot discuss the results with you. The doctor who requested the test will usually get the results within 10 working days.

How much radiation will you receive?

This examination exposes you to ionising radiation. The amount of radiation is 4.6 mSv(millisievert). 4.6 mSv is about the same amount of natural radiation you get living in the UK for 621 days.

Your doctor has recommended this scan because the benefit outweighs the very low risk of harm. The risk of getting cancer because of this radiation is around 23 in 1000 people. This is very small compared with the 1 in 2 risk of someone getting cancer naturally in their lifetime.

Directions and car parking

The Nuclear Medicine department is a short walk from the main entrance on the ground floor. When you enter the hospital through the main entrance, turn left to go into the West wing. Follow the signs for X-ray along the corridor, and you'll find X-ray on the left, just after the Fracture Clinic. Go to the X-ray reception and walk straight ahead. Follow signs for Nuclear Medicine. You will go through the double doors and enter the main reception area of the department.

Patient Information

There is parking available for patients and visitors, but spaces can be limited, so it is a good idea to arrive early. There is a charge for parking, and automatic number plate recognition systems are in use. For more details about directions, parking charges, and site maps, visit the trust website at (www.uhcw.nhs.uk).

Facilities available in the hospital

- Chilled water dispenser in the department.
- Costa Coffee, M&S and WHSmith in the main reception area.
- Three hospital restaurants.

What if you still have questions?

If you have any questions or concerns, we're here to help. Call the person who referred you for this treatment or call Nuclear Medicine.

The Nuclear Medicine department is open:

Monday to Friday: 9am to 5pm.

Call: 024 7696 8212

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format, please contact 024 7696 8212 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke-free policy.

Document History

Department:	Nuclear Medicine
Contact:	28212
Updated:	January 2025
Review:	January 2027
Version:	8
Reference:	HIC/LFT/733/08

Did we get it right?

We would like you to tell us what you think about our services. This will help us make further improvements and recognise members of staff who provide a good service.

Have your say. Scan the QR code or visit:

www.uhcw.nhs.uk/feedback

