

## Nuclear Medicine

# DaTscan

### Other formats

If you need this leaflet in another format such as Braille, large print, high contrast, British Sign Language or translated into another language, contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service:

- 01392 402093 (for Mid Devon, East Devon and Exeter services)
- 01271 314090 (for North Devon services)
- [rduh.pals@nhs.net](mailto:rduh.pals@nhs.net)

### What is DaTscan?

This scan uses a small amount of a radioactive tracer to create detailed pictures of how certain parts of your brain are working. It helps doctors assess conditions such as Parkinson's disease and related movement disorders.

### Is it safe for me to have the scan?

The amount of radioactivity used to take the pictures is very small and the radioactivity is short-lived.

Before we contact you, a radiologist will have checked the referring doctor's request to make sure this is the best test for you. Any risk is outweighed by the benefit from the information gained from performing the scan. If you have any concerns or would like further information please do not hesitate to contact us.

### Preparation for the scan

We have already checked your medication, but if anything has changed, please let us know before your scan, as some medicines can affect the accuracy of the results.

We have sent you two potassium iodide tablets. These protect your thyroid from the small amount of radioactive iodine in the injection you will be given.

If you have an allergy or sensitivity to iodine, if you are pregnant, think you may be pregnant or if you are breast feeding, please call the Nuclear Medicine Department on 01392 402124.

On the day of your scan:

- Take both tablets between one and four hours before your injection time
- You can take them with your usual medication.

## The injection

When you arrive, the radioactive tracer will be injected into a vein in your arm or hand using a small cannula. It feels similar to a blood test and should only take a few minutes.

After the injection, we need to allow time for the tracer to reach your brain. You will be asked to return to the department three hours later for your scan.

During this time, you can eat and drink normally and leave the hospital if you wish.

Please avoid spending longer than 10 minutes in each hour in close contact with children or pregnant women for 18 hours after the injection and reduce close contact with adults for nine hours after the injection. This is to reduce radiation exposure to others as much as possible.

Please note: if someone helps you with personal care, they may be exposed to a very small amount of radiation in the first 24 hours after your scan. This is similar to the radiation we all receive naturally over a few weeks.

The person who helps you will need to be informed of this exposure and agree to help you around the time of your examination. Please call Nuclear Medicine on 01392 402124 to discuss this with our colleagues.

## The scan

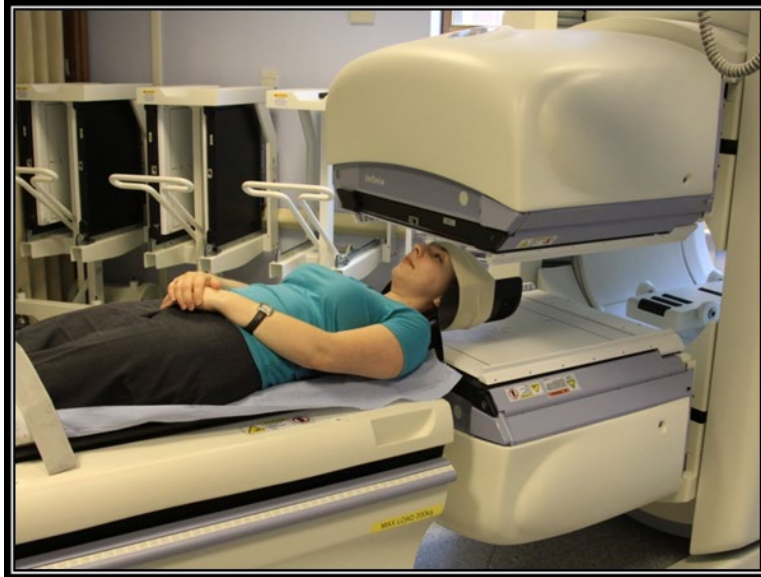
You do not have to get undressed for the scan. You will be asked to remove glasses, earrings or hair clips from your head. Hearing aids can stay in place.

You will lie still on your back on the scanning couch. We can support or raise your legs slightly if that helps you stay comfortable, and your head will be positioned in a cradle to help you keep still.

The scanner will come close to your head, but it is not a tunnel and it is not noisy. You will be able to speak to us at any time, and we will be in the room with you throughout the scan.

The scan usually takes 30–40 minutes. If you think lying still for this length of time may be difficult, or if you suffer from claustrophobia, please let us know before your appointment so we can plan how best to support you.

Here is a picture of how it will be set up.



## After the scan

You will not be given the results of the scan on the day of your appointment. The images will be reviewed, and a report will be sent to the doctor or healthcare professional who requested your scan, who will discuss the results with you.

## Changing your appointment

The injection used for your scan is ordered specifically for your appointment. If you are unable to attend, please let us know as soon as possible on 01392 402124 so we can offer the slot to another patient and book you a new date.

If you do not attend and do not let us know in advance, we may need to return your referral to your doctor.

## Finally

We want to make your visit as pleasant as possible. If you have any questions, concerns or if you found this leaflet difficult to read or understand, please contact us:

### **Nuclear Medicine Department**

01392 402124

or alternatively you can email us [rduh.rdenuclearmedicine@nhs.net](mailto:rduh.rdenuclearmedicine@nhs.net)

Please refer to the enclosed leaflet for more information on the department and how to get to the Royal Devon & Exeter (Wonford) Hospital.

Please refer to the enclosed leaflet or use the Trusts website for the latest information:  
<https://www.royaldevon.nhs.uk/our-sites/royal-devon-and-exeter-hospital-wonford/>

For more information on the Medical Imaging Department, including Nuclear Medicine please visit our website:

<https://www.royaldevon.nhs.uk/services/medical-imaging-radiology-x-ray/medical-imaging-eastern-services/>

Modified with acknowledgment of, and permission from, the Royal College of Radiologists.

## Your notes

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### PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) ensures that the NHS listens to patients, relatives, carers and friends, answers questions and resolves concerns as quickly as possible. If you have a query or concern, please contact PALS:

- 01392 402093 (for Mid Devon, East Devon and Exeter services)
- 01271 314090 (for North Devon services)
- [rduh.pals@nhs.net](mailto:rduh.pals@nhs.net)

### Have your say

Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust aims to provide high quality services. However, please tell us when something could be improved. If you have a comment or compliment about a service or treatment, please raise your comments with a member of staff or the PALS team in the first instance.

You can also share your feedback on the Care Opinion website at [www.careopinion.org.uk](http://www.careopinion.org.uk) or freephone 0800 122 3135.



Scan the QR code to visit the Care Opinion website →

Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust  
[www.royaldevon.nhs.uk](http://www.royaldevon.nhs.uk)

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