

Nuclear Medicine

DaTscan

What is DaTscan?

This scan uses an injection containing a small quantity of a radioactive tracer, which gives a picture showing information about the function and structure of the brain. It can help in the diagnosis of Parkinson's disease and other related movement conditions.

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 optimal 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.

You or the referring doctor will have already informed us of your current medications but please let us know before the scan if any of this medication has changed.

We have sent you six tablets which are to protect your thyroid gland from the small amount of radioactive iodine in the injection you will be given.

Please take two tablets at 18:00 (6pm) **the day before** the scan.

Please take two tablets at 18:00 (6pm) **on the day of** the scan.

Please take two tablets at 18:00 (6pm) **the day after** the scan.

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.

The injection

When you arrive for the appointment, the radioactive tracer will be injected into a vein in your arm or hand via an intravenous cannula (drip needle). This does not hurt any more than the 'pinprick' of a blood test and should only take a few minutes to give.

We then have to wait for this tracer to get into your brain, so you will be asked to **return** to the department **three hours after** the injection.

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

The scan

You do not have to get undressed for the scan, but will be asked to remove any metal objects from your head and neck area such as jewellery.

You will be asked to lie flat on your back on a couch. Your legs can be raised slightly and your head will be in a cradle.

The scan is taken by a special machine called a gamma camera.

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



This is not a tunnel but it will come close to your head and face. There are sensors in the camera which stop it moving if it touches anything, so it cannot hurt you.

You will not be left on your own at any time during the scan.

The scan usually takes 30-40 minutes and it is very important that you lie still. Please tell the department before your appointment if you think this will be difficult or if you suffer with claustrophobia.

After the scan

You can eat and drink normally. Please avoid spending longer than 10 minutes in each hour in close contact with children or pregnant women for 18 hours after the injection time and reduce close contact with adults for 9 hours after the injection. This is to reduce radiation exposure to others as much as possible.

Please note: *If a family member or friend usually helps you (the patient) with any personal care, please be aware that they may receive a very small exposure to radiation in the 24 hours after your scan. This radiation exposure is usually no greater than a few weeks' worth of natural, background radiation and is often much less. 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 staff.*

Changing your appointment

The injection material is ordered specifically for your appointment. If you are unable to keep this appointment, please let us know as soon as possible on **01392 402124**. We may then be able to offer this appointment to another patient. A further date and time will then be arranged for you.

Please be advised that if you fail to attend your appointment, it may be necessary to remove you from the nuclear medicine waiting list.

Finally

All the staff would like to make your visit as pleasant as possible. If you have any questions or concerns or if you found reading this leaflet difficult or you do not understand what it means for you, please do not hesitate to contact us:

Nuclear Medicine Department
01392 402124

or alternatively you can email us 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 Hospital at Wonford

Please refer to the enclosed leaflet or use the Trusts website for the latest information:

www.rdehospital.nhs.uk/patients/where

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

www.rdehospital.nhs.uk/patients/services/medical-imaging

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