

PET/CT Scan – Lakeridge Health: Patient Information Sheet

What is a PET/CT Scan?

A PET/CT scan is a type of medical imaging that combines two tests—Positron Emission Tomography (PET) and Computed Tomography (CT). The PET scan shows how your tissues and organs are functioning by detecting the activity of cells in your body. The CT scan provides images of your anatomy, including bones and organs, and enhances the localization of the activity on the PET scan. Together, they help doctors diagnose and monitor various conditions.

The scanner is in the nuclear medicine department at the Lakeridge Health Oshawa site.

Why Am I Having a PET/CT Scan?

Your doctor has recommended a PET-CT scan to:

- Detect cancer or see how it is responding to treatment.
- Check for areas of inflammation or infection.
- Evaluate heart conditions.
- Examine brain disorders, such as Alzheimer’s disease or epilepsy.

What Happens During the PET/CT Scan?

1. **Registration:** Please register at the diagnostic imaging/x-ray reception desk. You will be directed to the Nuclear Medicine department where the procedure will take place. A technologist will explain the procedure to you. Your weight and blood sugar (by finger prick) will be taken. An intravenous catheter will be inserted into your arm.
2. **Injection of Radiotracer:** You will receive a small injection of a radioactive substance (called a radiotracer) through the intravenous catheter. The most common PET radioactive tracer is called FDG (Fluorodeoxyglucose) which is a sugar like substance. It takes about 45 to 60 minutes for the radiotracer to travel through your body. You will be waiting in a quiet room during that time (no visitor please).
3. **The Scan:** You will lie on a table that slides into the PET/CT scanner, which is a large machine with a round, doughnut-shaped opening. The scan itself is painless and usually takes about 30 minutes. The technologist will be monitoring you during the scan.
4. **Holding Still:** It is important to remain still during the scan to get clear images.

Are There Any Risks?

- The amount of radiation exposure from a PET/CT scan is generally considered to be safe. However, inform your doctor if you are pregnant or breastfeeding.

After the Scan

- Drink extra fluids to help flush the radiotracer out of your body.
- You can resume your normal activities and diet immediately after the scan.
- The scan result will be sent to your referring physician within 2-3 days. Please ensure that you have follow up appointment with your referring physician to discuss the scan result.

PET/CT Scan – Lakeridge Health: Patient Preparation Guide

This document is intended to ensure that you are properly prepared for your PET/CT scan. Please follow all instructions carefully for the best possible results.

Important Preparation Steps:

1. **Diet Guidelines (24 Hours Prior):**
 - Follow a **high-protein, low-carbohydrate/sugar diet**.
 - Avoid breads, pastas, rice, pastries, fruits and juices, and potatoes.
 - Avoid any added sugars, including artificial sweeteners.
 - Foods high in protein include meat, fish, cheese, and vegetables.
2. **Fasting (NPO):**
 - Do not eat or drink anything (except plain unflavored water) for **6 hours** before your appointment. No gum chewing. No candies.
 - You may take your regular medications with plain unflavored water.
3. **For Diabetic Patients:**
 - Your blood sugar level should be **below 11 mmol/L**. If this is not achievable, please notify us in advance.
 - **Patients on oral diabetes medications:**
 - Take your medications early in the morning and remain NPO (except plain water) until the procedure.
 - **Patients on insulin:**
 - Do **not** take insulin on the day of the scan and remain NPO (except plain water).
 - If using a continuous insulin pump, turn it off for at least **4 hours** before the scan.
 - If you experience low blood sugar, follow your usual steps to correct it and notify us. **Ext 35472**
4. **Hydration:**
 - Drink **500 mL (2 cups)** of plain unflavored warm water during the **2 hours** leading up to your appointment.
 - NO coffee/tea.
5. **Claustrophobia:**
 - If you are claustrophobic, ask your physician for medication to help you relax. Ensure you have someone to drive you home afterward.
6. **Exercise Restrictions:**
 - **No exercise** (including prolonged walking) for **48 hours** before the scan.
7. **Clothing and Comfort:**
 - Stay warm for 1 hour before your appointment.
 - Wear warm, comfortable clothing without metal or zippers.
 - Avoid wearing jewelry.
 - Please avoid bringing children or pregnant women with you to the appointment.
8. **For Female Patients:**
 - **No pregnancy or breastfeeding.** Inform the medical team if there is a chance you might be pregnant.

Contact Information: If you have any questions or need further assistance, please contact us at 905-576-8711 ext. 35472, PET Scan department, Lakeridge Health Oshawa.