

Patient information leaflet

DaTSCAN

Radiology department

Introduction

We hope this guide will answer your questions about your DaTSCAN. Please contact the team if you require further information via the details at the end of this leaflet.

What is a DaTSCAN?

DaTSCAN is used as a method to evaluate whether you have a Parkinsonian Syndrome. It involves an injection into your arm of a radioactive substance called DaTSCAN which is taken up into various parts of the brain. It emits gamma rays which will be detected by a piece of equipment called a gamma camera. Depending on how it is distributed, we can differentiate Parkinson's syndromes with essential tremor or Lewy body dementia with Alzheimer's disease.

Why do I need a DaTSCAN?

You are having this examination as it will help your doctor to decide on the cause of your symptoms. This procedure will give clearer information to the clinicians treating you.

What are the associated risks?

The amount of radioactive tracer (a radioactive solution often known as radiotracer or radioactive isotope) used to take the pictures is very small and the radioactivity is short lived. The risk is outweighed by the benefit from the information that is gained by having the scan. A doctor will have checked the request to make sure this is the optimal test before we contact you.

This procedure involves receiving a dose of a radioactive tracer, this does not have any known side effects and does not make you feel drowsy.

Preparing for your procedure (Including medication)

We will call you before your appointment to check your current medication and any allergies. We will let you know if you need to stop taking any medications that may interfere with the test.

You may eat and drink normally before your appointment.

Pregnancy

If you are pregnant, think you may be pregnant, or are breastfeeding, please tell the radiographer **before** your appointment date, as we may need to postpone the scan or give special instructions with regard to breastfeeding.

Getting to us

The Princess Alexandra Hospital (Hamstel Road, Harlow, Essex, CM20 1QX), follow the signage to the radiology reception, which is located on the ground floor, green zone. Please let the receptionists know that you have arrived for your appointment.

When should I arrive?

Please arrive in the radiology department at the time arranged with the nuclear medicine department when booking your appointment.

You may receive an appointment letter in the post and this may be followed up with a text confirmation.

Can someone stay with me in the hospital?

You are able to have a friend or relative attend with you, as long as they are not young children or pregnant; however, due to ionising radiation regulations, only patients are allowed in the scanning room.

(If the child is the patient then obviously parents may accompany them for their scan).

Children are not allowed in the waiting area unattended. Our staff are not permitted to supervise children, so please ensure child care arrangements are in place to avoid your tests being rescheduled.

The day of the procedure

A member of the Nuclear Medicine team will collect you from the waiting area and bring you into our preparation room, where they will explain the procedure to you and answer any questions you may have.

We will then give you a solution to drink this will stop the DaTSCAN entering your thyroid.

One hour after you have had your drink the radioactive DaTSCAN is injected into a suitable vein, usually into your arm or the back of your hand.

The injection is given slowly in order to minimise any pain.

The amount of radiation you receive is small; there are no serious side effects to this injection.

Once your injection is done you will be told when to return for your scan. This is usually about **three hours later**. This delay allows the time for the injection to work. You may leave the department during this time and can eat and drink normally.

The procedure

When you return to the department you will be taken into the scanning room. You will be asked to lie down with your head resting on a pad. Straps are used to keep your head in position as we need you to keep as still as possible for this procedure.

During the scan two cameras move around you. This takes about 30 minutes.

Staff are present in the room with you whilst the scan is taking place.

Once the scan is completed you are free to go home.

After the procedure

You can eat, drink as normal and go where you wish. Please avoid close contact with children and pregnant women for the rest of the day. Close contact means having a child sit next to you for more than half an hour. This is to avoid exposing children to unnecessary radiation.

Please continue drinking more than usual to help clear the radiation from your body.

Can I drive after my procedure?

You are able to drive as soon as you are discharged from the department.

How soon can I return to work?

It is advisable to return to work the following day after your scan. However, if you wish to discuss this further, please contact the department using the telephone number at the end of this leaflet.

When will I get my results?

You will not know the results of your examination immediately. The radiologist will report their findings to the doctor who arranged your procedure, who will discuss the results with you. It usually takes a couple of weeks for the results to become available.

Contacting the team

If you have any further questions, please contact the nuclear medicine team on; **01279 827120**, from **Monday to Friday, 8am to 4pm**.

There is an answerphone available outside of these hours. Please leave a message and a member of the team will contact you.

Your feedback matters

If you would like to give feedback on your care, please contact our patient experience team at paht.pals@nhs.net or **01279 827211**.

Please contact the communications team at paht.communications@nhs.net if you would like this leaflet in another language or format.