

A Patient's Guide for PET Scans



The PETSCAN Centre provides PET (positron emission tomography) scans for cancer patients. They are the most effective way to diagnose the onset, spread and recurrence of most types of cancer. Patients often ask what is involved in getting a PET scan. Here is a short "Patient's Guide."

If you are concerned about cancer, talk to your doctor or specialist about PET. The Centre needs a doctor's referral and your doctor may wish to contact the Centre's Medical Director. As PET scans are not covered by MSP, the cost is \$2,500, payable by cash, cheque or credit card. You should talk to your health insurer or your employer about coverage.

Once the doctor's requisition has been received, the Centre

will contact you to make an appointment, which will usually be the following week. You may be asked to help in gathering relevant information (previous CT scans, etc.).

Appointments start at 7:00am and go to about 1:00 pm. Plan to be at the Centre for about 3 hours. You can bring someone with you. Do not eat breakfast or drink anything but water that morning, and wear comfortable loose clothing. Check with the

Centre's Administrator if you take medication or are diabetic.

On arrival you will be met by Janine or Shaunene. After some paperwork and payment, you will go to the patient prep room where Roger or David will do the injection of the glucose tracer (called FDG). You then sit back and relax for 40 minutes. This is a normal intravenous injection, and should not cause any discomfort. FDG seeks out and identifies the location and status of any cancer. FDG is safe, and there are no side effects.

Before the scan you will visit the washroom and then proceed into the scanner room. The PET scanner is a camera which picks up signals sent out by the FDG in your body. You will need to lie very still on a narrow bed, which moves into the camera's opening in stages. A "full body" scan is from mid-thigh to the base of the brain. A head scan may also be done. The process takes about an hour.

After the scan, you will be given a CD with the scan information. A report prepared by the Centre's Medical Director will be sent to your referring doctor within 24 hours.

The people at the Centre want to make you as comfortable as possible. To obtain doctor referral forms or any further information, talk to Shaunene at (604) 689-7776, or visit the Centre's website at www.petscan.ca

A PET Scan:

- Is safe and there are no side effects;
- Can replace multiple medical procedures with a single exam;
- Can reduce or eliminate futile or unnecessary treatments;
- Can help with the planning of, or entirely eliminate, surgery;
- Can validate or alter patient care;
- Is done in less than three hours;
- Provides interpretations within 48 hours to your doctor.

Previous Articles

In our series of articles about PET, we have discussed so far the following topics:

1. PET – General Introduction (June 8)
2. The Vancouver PETSCAN Centre (June 15)
3. Use of PET in Lung Cancer (June 22)
4. Use of PET in Breast Cancer (June 29)
5. Use of PET in Colorectal Cancer (July 13)
6. Use of PET in Melanoma (July 27)
7. Use of PET in Lymphoma (August 10)
8. PET and the Health Care System (August 24)
9. A Patient's Guide for PET Scans (Sept. 7)

If you didn't have a chance to pick up a copy of any of these issues, you can find the articles on the PETSCAN Centre's website: www.petscan.ca/news.htm

Full-body clinical PET scans are available at the Vancouver PETSCAN Centre.



For more information call:
(604) 689-7776
Visit our website:
www.petscan.ca

