

Information for Patients and Carers

DaTSCAN Dopamine Active Transfer Scan

A decorative graphic at the bottom of the page consisting of three overlapping, wavy horizontal bands in shades of blue, ranging from a light sky blue to a dark navy blue.

What is a DaTSCAN?

A DaTscan is a scan of the brain. It can be used to differentiate between Parkinson's Disease and other similar conditions. It can also be used to give information about the brain of patients who are suffering from memory loss.

The procedure involves an injection followed by a scan using a gamma camera similar to the one shown in the picture.



Please inform us before you attend:

- If you are, or think, you may be pregnant
- If you are breastfeeding/ chest feeding
- If you weigh over 25 stones (158 Kilograms)
- You are unable to lay on your back for 45 minutes
- If you have problems with mobility and/or need a hoist to transfer

Preparation for the scan

When you attend, you will be given 2 tablets of potassium iodate to swallow; these tablets protect your thyroid gland from the radioactivity in your body after the injection. You will then need to wait one hour for the tablets to be absorbed before we give your injection of radioactive tracer.

Can you bring a relative or friend with you?

A relative or friend may accompany you to the hospital but they will not usually be allowed into the room when you have your examination. Please note, we have limited seating and do not have child care facilities, therefore small children cannot be accommodated.

Your scan

A radiographer will inject a small amount of radioactive tracer (in a liquid form) into a vein in your hand or arm.

After the injection, a minimum of 3 hours must pass before we scan you. This is to allow the injection to accumulate in your brain.

During this time you may leave the department and eat and drink as normal.

We advise that you drink extra fluids for the rest of the day to help reduce the radiation in your body. If you are on restricted fluids, we will give you further advice.

You will be asked to empty your pockets, remove glasses and hearing aids. You do not need to undress. During the scan you will lie on your back on the scanning table. Your head will be placed into a head rest for the scan.

Special cameras which are about the size of a large suitcase will come close to you during the scan, but you will not be enclosed in a tunnel.

You will not be left on your own as there will be someone close by at all times. The scan usually takes around 45 minutes and you will have to lie still during this time.

Are there any side effects?

We do not expect any side effects from the injection.

Are there any risks?

All medical procedures and tests carry both risks and benefits, your doctor has requested this scan as they feel the information that we will gain is a greater benefit than the risk from being exposed to radiation. Our injections contain a small amount of radioactivity that emits gamma rays (these are similar to X-rays). We use the smallest dose possible, in line with national regulations to provide as much information as we can about your condition.

The results of your scan will give your doctor useful information about your condition and will help to plan your treatment.

After the scan

After your scan you must continue to follow the advice about drinking that you were given after the injection. You are free to go home or go back to work.

Please avoid spending a long time in close contact with young children or pregnant women for the rest of the day. You should aim to spend no more than 15 minutes each hour cuddling or sitting next to them. It is also best if you do not share a bed with a child or a pregnant woman on the evening of your scan.

Travel abroad

Please inform the radiographer on arrival if you intend to travel abroad within 7 days of your scan. Radiation monitoring at security in airports or ports may detect some of the radiation you have received during your scan. We will give you a letter that will state what test you have had and this can be used when travelling.

Your results

The images will be reviewed after your visit. You will be advised when and how you will receive your results at this time. You will not receive any results on the day of the scan.

Contact details

Should you require further advice or information please telephone Nuclear Medicine on **01772 522381**.

Sources of further information

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk

www.nhs.uk

www.patient.co.uk

www.accessable.co.uk

Further information about radiation can be found on the government webpage: Medical Radiation: uses, measurements and dose safety advice: www.gov.uk/government/collections/medical-radiation-uses-dose-measurements-and-safety-advice

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www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets

Lancashire Teaching Hospitals is a smoke-free site. Smoking is not permitted anywhere on any of our premises, either inside or outside the buildings. Our staff will ask you about your smoking status when you come to hospital and will offer you support and advice about stopping smoking this will include Nicotine Replacement Therapy to help manage your symptoms of withdrawal and the opportunity to speak to a nurse or advisor from the specialist Tobacco and Alcohol Care Team.

If you want to stop smoking, you can also contact Smokefree Lancashire on Freephone 08081962638

Please ask a member of staff if you would like help in understanding this information.

This information can be made available in large print, audio, Braille and in other languages.

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Division: Diagnostics and Clinical Support

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