

Whole Body PET/CT Scan Preparation



What is a Whole Body PET/CT Scan?

This scan combines PET (Positron Emission Tomography) and CT (Computed Tomography) to give your care team detailed images of your body. It helps doctors evaluate cancer, treatment response, and other conditions. Your appointment will take approximately 2 hours. This includes test explanation, glucose check, IV start, injection for imaging, wait period, and scan time.

Before Your Appointment

- **No food or drink (NPO) for 6 hours** before your scan.
 - **Only plain water is allowed.**
 - Avoid gum, mints, cough drops, and sugar-free products.
- **Document the last time you ate.**
- **Stay hydrated** with plain water.

Medications

- **Take your regular medications** unless told otherwise.
- **Do not take:**
 - Diabetic medications within 6 hours of the scan.
 - Medications in syrup form or “magic mouthwash.”
 - Any medications with food.

Special Instructions for Diabetic Patients

- **No diabetic medications (including insulin) for 4-6 hours before the scan.**
- Blood sugar must be **under 200 mg/dL** at the time of injection. If blood sugar is too high, you may need to reschedule.
- Insulin pumps should be set to basal only; no bolus within 4 hours of injection.
- If blood sugar is **under 40 mg/dL**, your physician must be contacted immediately.

Activity & Other Restrictions

- **Avoid strenuous activity for 24 hours before the scan** (minimum 6 hours).
- No IV fluids with dextrose or TPN for 6 hours before the scan (use saline only).
- Delay high-density barium studies until after the exam, or wait at least 72 hours.
- For thyroid cancer patients:
 - Your doctor may stop thyroxine for 3 weeks, or
 - Give recombinant TSH for 2 days before the scan.
- No restrictions on smoking, but your smoking history will be recorded.

Cancer Treatment Timing

- **Chemotherapy** should ideally be completed 10-14 days before the scan.
- **Radiation therapy** should be completed 3-4 months before the scan if the purpose is to assess treatment response.

If Prep Isn't Followed

- The technologist will contact your doctor for guidance.
- Your doctor will decide whether to proceed or reschedule.
- If no physician can be reached, your appointment will be rescheduled.
- If the scan is discontinued, your doctor will be notified with the reason.

After The Scan

- After the scan, drink plenty of fluid and flush the toilet twice for the rest of the day.
- Limit time around pregnant woman and children.

Key Takeaway

Following these guidelines helps ensure your scan is safe and accurate. If you have questions about medications, treatments, or preparation, please contact your care team before your appointment.