

## Nuclear Medicine

# DATscan

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### What is DATscan?

This scan uses an injection containing a small quantity of a radioactive tracer, which gives a picture showing information about the function and structure of the brain. It can help in the diagnosis of Parkinson's disease and other related conditions.

### Is it safe for me to have the scan?

The amount of radioactivity used to take the pictures is very small and the radioactivity is short-lived.

Before we contact you a Radiologist will have checked the referring doctor's request to make sure this is the optimal test for you. Any risk is outweighed by the benefit from the information gained from performing the scan. If you have any concerns or would like further information please do not hesitate to contact us.

### Preparation for the scan.

You or the referring doctor will have already informed us of your current medications but please let us know before the scan if any of this medication has changed.

We have sent you six tablets which are to protect your thyroid gland from the small amount of radioactive iodine in the injection you will be given.

Please take two tablets at 18:00 (6pm) **the day before** the scan.

Please take two tablets at 18:00 (6pm) **on the day of** the scan.

Please take two tablets at 18:00 (6pm) **the day after** the scan.

**If you have an allergy or sensitivity to iodine, if you are pregnant, think you may be pregnant or if you are breast feeding, please call the Nuclear Medicine Department on 01392 402124.**

### Valuables

Patients are encouraged to leave their valuables at home. It is the patient's responsibility to ensure all valuables are on their person before leaving the Nuclear Medicine Department.

### The injection

When you arrive for the appointment, the radioactive tracer will be injected into a vein in your arm or hand via an intravenous cannula (drip needle). This does not hurt any more than the 'pinprick' of a blood test and should only take a few minutes to give.

We then have to wait for this tracer to get into your brain, so you will be asked to return to the department three hours after the injection.

During this time you can eat and drink normally and leave the hospital if you wish.

### The scan

You do not have to get undressed for the scan, but will be asked to remove any metal objects from your head and neck area such as jewellery.

You will be asked to lie flat on your back on a couch. Your legs can be raised slightly and your head will be in a cradle.

The scan is taken by a special machine called a gamma camera.

Here is a picture of how it will be set up...



This is not a tunnel but it will come close to your head and face. There are sensors in the camera which stop it moving if it touches anything, so it cannot hurt you.

You will not be left on your own at any time during the scan.

The scan usually takes 30-40 minutes and it is very important that you lie still. Please tell the department before the scan if you think this will be difficult or if you suffer with claustrophobia.

## After the scan

You can eat and drink normally and go anywhere you wish. Please avoid spending longer than 10 minutes in close contact with children or anyone who is pregnant women for 48 hours after the injection time. This is to reduce their radiation exposure as much as possible.

## What will happen to the results?

We aim to report examinations as soon as possible. The results will be sent to the Doctor who requested the scan to be done.

You will **NOT** be told the results of your examination at the time of your appointment.

## More information

All the staff would like to make your visit as pleasant as possible. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us:

**Nuclear Medicine Department  
01392 402124**

## Cancelling your appointment

The injection material is ordered specifically for your appointment. If you are unable to keep this appointment, please let us know as soon as possible on **01392 402124**. We may then be able to offer this appointment to another patient. A further date and time will then be arranged for you.

Please be advised that if you fail to attend your appointment, it may be necessary to remove you from the nuclear medicine waiting list.

**Please note: If you have had D&V (diarrhoea and vomiting) you will need to contact us to rebook your appointment unless you have been clear for the past 48 hours.**

*Modified with acknowledgment of, and permission from, the Royal College of Radiologists.*

The Trust cannot accept any responsibility for the accuracy of the information given if the leaflet is not used by RD&E staff undertaking procedures at the RD&E hospitals.

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