

DATSCAN

Patient information factsheet

What is a Nuclear Medicine Scan?

- A nuclear medicine scan is a very common medical procedure.
- It uses small amounts of radioactive materials to highlight a specific organ.
- This helps your Doctor diagnose (find the problem) and, in some cases, treat a number of diseases.
- The scan uses a gamma camera to look for signs of disease.
- It shows the Doctor how well your organs are working. Other types of scans show what your organs look like.



What is a DATSCAN?

- This scan checks the level of dopamine in your brain using a small and safe amount of radioactive material (a tracer), to help see it.
- If the brain takes in less of the radioactive material, it can mean some dopamine nerve cells are lost. This can happen with Parkinson's disease and similar conditions.
- Losing dopamine nerve cells can cause problems with moving, like walking or using your hands.
- This scan can also help find out if someone has Lewy Body dementia.

- The DATSCAN radioactive tracer is an expensive medicine. It costs £700 per patient.
- The dose is ordered from Europe four working days before your appointment.
- **If you cannot come to your appointment, please tell us at least four working days before. This lets us cancel the medicine, which can only be used for one day.**
- **It is very important that you confirm your appointment when you receive this letter.** Our telephone number and email address are below, in the section 'Contact our service'.

Do I have to do anything to prepare for this procedure?

- Yes. **It is very important that you confirm your appointment when you receive your appointment letter.**
- If you do not confirm, the dose will not be ordered, and the scan cannot be done.
- There is a list of medications below which you may need to stop taking.
- Please check your medications against this list.
- **You must talk to your clinician first before you stop taking these medications or if you have any worries or concerns.**
- Please call us if you have any questions about medications on the telephone number at the end of this leaflet.
- **Please let us know if you are allergic to Iodine.**

Medication that needs to be stopped before a DATSCAN procedure	
Medication	How many days before the scan you need to stop taking it
Amfetamine	7
Bupropion	8
Cocaine	2
Dexamfetamine	7
Dexamethylphenidate	7
Ephedrine	1

Fentanyl	5
Isoflurane	1
Ketamine	1
Mazindol	3
Methylamphetamine	7
Modafinil	3
Norepinephrine	Only at high doses
Phentermine	1
Phencyclidine	1
Phenylephrine	Only at high doses
Radafaxine	3

What will happen when I come for a DATSCAN?

On arrival

- A tablet called Potassium Iodide will be given to you.
- This stops the radioactive tracer from being absorbed by your thyroid gland.

15 minutes after the tablet was taken

- A radioactive tracer will be injected into your vein. This helps us see the part of your brain that we need to scan, using our special camera.
- You may leave the department after this injection and return when it is time for your scan.

3 to 4 hours after injection

- You will be asked to come back at this time so we can scan your brain.
- You will be asked to lie on your back on a bed with your head in a small cradle.
- Two cameras will move around your head to create the images, but they do not touch the head.
- The entire scan can take up to 45 minutes.
- It is important that you keep still during the scan.

Is it dangerous?

- The scans are safe and painless.
- Because a small amount of radioactive tracer is used, there is only a very small risk of radiation exposure.
- If you have any worries or questions about the scan, please talk to your Doctor or contact the Nuclear Medicine department.

Are there any precautions?

- Please tell the Nuclear Medicine Technologist or Radiographer if you might be pregnant or are breastfeeding before you come to your appointment.
- Please tell us if you are very afraid of needles (needle phobia) or cannot lie down flat.
- The camera comes very close to your head during the scan so please let us know if you feel anxious in small spaces (claustrophobia).

What happens after the scan?

- Drink lots of water.
- The radioactive tracer leaves your body through your pee (urine). Drinking lots of water will help get rid of it faster.
- **Do not have any blood or urine tests for 24 hours after your scan because the radioactive tracer may still be in your body.**

How do I get my result?

- A Radiologist reviews (looks at) the scan and sends the report to the Specialist Doctor who asked for it. They will then contact you directly.
- This can take about 2 to 3 weeks.

Is there anything else I should know?

- You will need to lie down flat and stay still during the scan. Moving can make the pictures unclear.
- The scan can take anywhere from 15 to 60 minutes. This will depend on the type of procedure you are having.
- **Please do not bring anyone with you who is pregnant or under 18 years old.** This is because there are radioactive materials in the department.
- **We do not allow anyone under 18** to interpret for patients.
- If you need an interpreter, please tell the Nuclear Medicine department, and they will arrange one for you.

Contact our service

Email: whh-tr.nuclearmedwhitthealth@nhs.net

Monday to Thursday, 9 am to 5 pm: 020 7288 5517.

Friday: Please call our mobile on 07747 037 143.

Contact our Trust

If you have a compliment, complaint or concern, please contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on **020 7288 5551** or whh-tr.PALS@nhs.net.

If you need a large print, audio or translated copy of this leaflet, please email whh-tr.patient-information@nhs.net. We will try our best to meet your needs.

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