

WHAT IS PET/CT?

PET/CT combines two radiology technologies into a single device, making it possible for doctors to collect two kinds of information at the same time. PET stands for Positron Emission Tomography. This is a type of nuclear medicine test that allows radiologists to see how different cells in the human body are working.

For instance, normal cells work differently than diseased cells.

CT stands for Computed

Tomography. This test shows radiologists very high detail of

the body's anatomy. When these

two types of scanning are combined, it is

called fusion imaging. This technology allows the radiologist to see how the body is working and, if there are any problems, helps pinpoint where in the body the problem is occurring.

Before having a PET/CT scan, patients receive a dose of a "tracer," which mimics substances found naturally in the body. Diseased cells use "tracers" differently than normal cells. During the scan, the tracers are detected by the PET/CT system, creating an image of the patient and highlighting any abnormal tissue. This image helps physicians determine:

- The presence of disease.
- The location and extent of the disease.
- How rapidly the disease is spreading.
- Whether treatment is working.



WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE EXAM?

It is important that you drink as much water as possible for the rest of the day and empty your bladder as often as possible. This will result in a more rapid clearance of the "tracer" and/or contrast agent from your body. You can drive and resume normal activities immediately afterward unless you have received sedation.

WHEN WILL I GET THE RESULTS OF THE EXAM?

The results will be given to your referring physician as soon as the images are analyzed, usually within two to three days.

WHERE CAN I HAVE A PET OR PET/CT SCAN?

Southcoast Hospitals Group now offers PET/CT services in a state-of-the-art mobile unit that is located at one of **two convenient locations**, offering convenient parking and easy accessibility.

Center for Women's Health

300 B Faunce Corner Road
Dartmouth, MA 02747
508-998-0600

Truesdale Clinic

1030 President Avenue
Fall River, MA 02720
508-679-7392



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What you should know

PET/CT



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WHAT ARE THE SPECIFIC BENEFITS OF PET AND PET/CT?

- The information obtained from these types of exams is different and often can't be obtained with other imaging tests.
- Potential for earlier detection of a problem or disease.
- Painless procedure and may minimize the need for further, more invasive testing.
- Effective tracking of the response to treatment of a problem.
- Greater accuracy in staging cancer and more precise treatment planning.
- Short imaging time (usually less than 30 minutes).

WHEN IS PET OR PET/CT USED?

PET/CT is widely used in oncology (cancer).

PET/CT helps to provide critical information about whether a tumor is cancerous, the extent of the cancer, the involvement of other organs and the effectiveness of therapy. PET/CT also has other uses in the fields of cardiology and neurology. In these cases it can be used to determine appropriate heart disease treatment and provide accurate information about the brain and epileptic seizures.

WHAT HAPPENS DURING THE EXAM?

A PET/CT exam consists of a PET scan and a CT scan. The PET portion will require a dose of a "tracer," which will be given intravenously (through an IV). You will then remain in a quiet environment to rest and remain relatively still while the "tracer" travels through your body and gets absorbed by the organ or tissue being studied. This process takes approximately 60 minutes. **The CT portion may require administration of an IV contrast.** This depends on the reason for the

study. After this resting period you will be placed on an imaging table so that the scanner can detect the "tracer" and create pictures offering details on both the structure and function of the organs. These pictures will be interpreted by a radiologist and shared with your health care provider.

HOW LONG DOES AN EXAM TAKE AND WILL IT BE UNCOMFORTABLE?

In most cases you will be on the scanner table for less than 30 minutes. The scan itself is painless. The design of the scanner is "open" in the middle, allowing you to see and speak to your technologist. An IV line will be started in your arm in order to get the "tracer" into your body, at which time you might feel a slight prick.

HOW DO I PREPARE FOR THE EXAM?

For six hours before your test, do not eat or drink (except water). Do not even chew gum. Your last meal before the scan should be high in protein and low in carbohydrates. For example:

- **Dinner:** steak, baked chicken, fish, cheese, asparagus, broccoli, mushrooms.
No pasta, potatoes, rice or bread.
- **Breakfast:** eggs, bacon, sausage.
No breakfast should be eaten if you have an appointment before noon.

Please refrain from exercising 24 hours prior to the exam. We will ask what medications you take when you schedule your appointment. You will be provided further instructions at that time. If you feel you will need sedation or are a diabetic, contact us for further instructions prior to your scheduled appointment. During the exam, you will be asked to stay in a quiet, resting state. It's important that you are able to lie still during the exam.