



Mater Misericordiae University Hospital

Preparing for your DAT Scan

What is a 'DATSCAN'?

In Nuclear Medicine we use an injection of a small amount of radioactivity to get more information about certain parts of your body. This injection travels in the blood stream and collects in a certain part of the brain. A 'DATSCAN' gives your doctor more information about your illness, which cannot be seen on other scan you may have had done. However, it will take at least 3 hours for the required amount to get there.

What will your scan involve?

Firstly, when you arrive at the department you will be given 2 tablets to take. This stops the injection getting into the thyroid gland. After 1 hour a radiographer will give you a small injection into a vein in your arm. We then have to wait 3 hours before the injection travels to the required part of the brain. During this time you are free to leave the hospital and fasting is not necessary.

On returning you will be asked to lie on a bed and a special camera will rotate around your head but will never touch you, this takes about 30-40mins.

Is there any preparation before this scan?

There is no preparation for this scan. If it is necessary for you to stop taking any medication you will be contacted prior to your scan. You do not need to fast for this scan.

What about after the scan?

After the scan you will be well enough to go home or back to work.

It is recommended that you minimise the time you spend in close contact (within 2 meters) with small children and pregnant women for the 24 hours following the injection, to avoid unnecessarily exposing them to very small amounts of radiation.

Please do not bring small children to the department with you, however, you are quite welcome to bring an adult companion to the department as long as they are definitely not pregnant or trying for a baby.

How much radiation will I get?

Firstly, it is very important to know that you will only receive a very small amount of radiation. We are all exposed to natural background radiation during our lives. The radiation dose from this scan is similar to that which you would receive from the environment over a period of 1-2 years. The benefits to you having this scan outweigh any possible radiation risks.

Do I need to bring anything with me?

Don't forget to bring your appointment card if your doctor gave you one. Although every effort is made to keep to the appointed times, unforeseeable events may cause delays and therefore a magazine/book may be useful.



Mater Misericordiae University Hospital

How soon will I get the results?

A doctor in Nuclear Medicine analyses your scan and writes a report, which is then sent to your doctor. Your doctor should then have the results within the next 7-10 days or else at the time of your next appointment.

When you come for your scan you will first need to go to the X-ray department.

LADIES

It is very important that we avoid carrying out this examination if you are pregnant or think you might be pregnant. If this is the case, please contact us in advance. When you arrive for your scan you will be asked for the date of the first day of your last period. If your period is overdue, your appointment date may be re-arranged.