



Royal Cornwall Hospitals
NHS Trust

Brain scan (DaTSCAN)



One + all | we care

Who is this leaflet for?

Your doctor would like you to have a nuclear medicine brain scan and has arranged for you to visit our department. This leaflet aims to answer any questions you may have, but please don't hesitate to contact us if you need any more information.

What is a brain scan?

This is a sensitive test that shows how a part of your brain is working.

Are there any alternatives?

You could have an MRI or CT scan, but you may need these tests as well as your DaTSCAN.

Do I need to prepare for it?

No, but we advise you to wear loose and comfortable clothing. You can eat and drink normally. You may need to stop taking some of your prescribed medication, but you will be informed by telephone if this is necessary.

What will happen?

Please arrive at the time stated on your appointment letter. Shortly after your arrival you will be given some tablets to protect your thyroid from the injection used for the scan.

After about an hour you will be given a small injection of a radioactive tracer, which will be injected into your arm. It is very unlikely that you will have any side effects from this injection.

After the injection you will be able to leave the department and return 3-4 hours later for your scan. Your radiographer will discuss the return time with you.

How is the scan performed?

You will be asked to lie on a bed for about 45 minutes, while the radiographer takes pictures. The camera will be positioned close to your head and will move slowly around you. The camera is open and quiet and you should not feel claustrophobic.

Is it suitable for everyone?

If there is a chance that you may be pregnant or are breast-feeding, please contact us before your appointment date. If you are a woman of childbearing age, we will ask you to confirm that you are not pregnant. If there is any doubt we will have to rebook your test, unless the test is urgent.

If you have any special requirements regarding manual handling, or if you suffer from urinary incontinence, please inform us before you attend your appointment so that we can make suitable arrangements to help you.

What can I do between the injection and the scan?

You can go home and return later for your scan, if convenient, or you may stay with us and either buy a meal or snack from the hospital or bring lunch with you.

Are there any risks?

We ensure that the amount of radiation you receive is as small as possible. It is similar to the natural radiation you would receive from living in Cornwall for seven months. Radioactivity is eliminated from your body very quickly and allergic reactions are very rare.

Should I take any precautions?

Yes. Please avoid non-essential contact with children or pregnant women for the rest of the day.

Can I bring someone with me?

Yes, but please do not bring pregnant women or children unless they are the patient.

When will I get my results?

We are unable to give you the results of your scan on the day you attend. We will send a report to the doctor who asked us to do the scan as soon as possible. If a hospital consultant arranged your scan, a follow up appointment should be sent to you in due course.

Where can I park?

Parking is in the pay and display car parks. There are 'dropping off' points and parking for the disabled near the main entrances.

We recommend the Park and Ride service at Langarth (West Truro) and Tregurra (East Truro) which operates a frequent bus service to the Hospital.

www.cornwall.gov.uk/parkfortruro

Please allow plenty of time when coming for your appointment.

Where is the Nuclear Medicine department?

We are located in the basement of the Tower Block. On reaching the basement follow the signs to Nuclear Medicine, which is at the end of the corridor past Medical Physics.

Contact us

If you have any queries or need any further information, please contact the Nuclear Medicine department on 01872 252330.

If for any reason you cannot attend, please inform the department so that another patient can have your appointment.

Further information

The following web site provides more information about your test, although techniques may vary from department to department:

www.ucl.ac.uk/nuclear-medicine/patient

**Please note that the Royal Cornwall
Hospital is a smoke-free environment.
Smoking is not permitted inside the hospital
or on the grounds at any time.**

If you would like this leaflet in large print,
braille, audio version or in another
language, please contact the General
Office on 01872 252690

