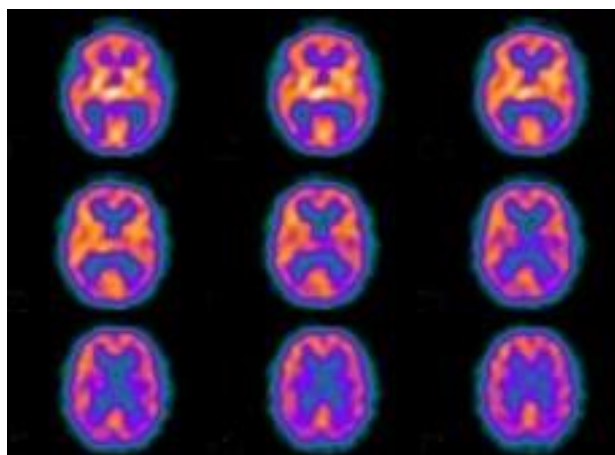


Brain Perfusion Scan

Nuclear Medicine Patient Information Leaflet



Prepared by the British Nuclear Medicine Society.

The content of this leaflet is intended for general information only. Details of how a scan is carried out may vary from one department to another and may be changed according to individual patient conditions.

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What is a brain perfusion scan?

A brain perfusion scan is a nuclear medicine test that looks at the blood flow to different areas of your brain. It can be used to help in the diagnosis of various conditions including dementia, stroke, ischaemia (low blood flow) and in some kinds of epilepsy.

Is it safe for me to have the scan?

For this scan it is necessary to inject a small amount of radioactive tracer, called a radiopharmaceutical, in order to take the pictures. The small risk from this (similar to a CT scan) is outweighed by the information that will be gained by taking the scan. A doctor will have checked the request to make sure this is the appropriate test for you.

If you have any concerns or would like further information, please contact the department where you are having your scan. If you don't understand why you need to have this scan, please speak to the doctor who referred you.

For female patients aged 12 to 55

If you know that you are pregnant, or there is any chance that you might be pregnant, please contact the department where you will be having your scan. Do this as soon as possible as the scan can be postponed if it is not urgent.

Also, contact the department if you are breast-feeding, as they may give you special instructions.

Preparation for your scan

Please avoid taking large amounts of stimulants, such as caffeine, cola and energy drinks, before your appointment.

Your injection

A tube connected to a small needle will be inserted into a vein in your arm or hand. You may have had a blood test in the past. This is much the same. The 'pinprick' of the needle may hurt a bit, but that is all.

You will be asked to relax in a quiet area without speaking for a few minutes. Then a small amount of radioactive tracer will be injected through the tube, but you won't feel this.

After the injection you will be asked to wait for between 30 and 60 minutes before the pictures can be taken.



Photo used with the permission of the College of Radiographers

Your scan

The scan is taken by a special machine called a gamma camera. The camera detector(s) may come quite close to your head. There are sensors in the camera which stop it moving before it touches anything, so it cannot hurt you.

You will be asked to lie on your back on a special couch with your head underneath the camera detector. The scans usually take between 30 and 45 minutes and it is very important that you keep still during this time. If you think that you will find this difficult, please speak to the nuclear medicine department before your appointment.



You will not be left on your own – there will always be someone immediately available, either in the room or behind a screen.

After your scan

It is very unlikely that you will feel any side-effects after the scan, but if you think that you have, please let the nuclear medicine department know.

You may continue all your normal activities unless you have been advised otherwise.

After your scan there will be some radioactivity left in your body but this will not present a significant risk to other people around you. However, for the rest of the day, we suggest that you try to keep any time that you spend within arm's length of pregnant women, babies and small children as short as possible; but there is no need to stop giving children essential love and care.

The radioactivity in your body will soon disappear.

Travelling abroad

It is perfectly safe for you to travel abroad after your scan, but many airports and sea ports are now equipped with very sensitive radiation detectors. So it is possible that the very small amount of radioactivity left in your body could set off a detector as you pass through security. Therefore, if you intend to travel abroad within a week following your scan, it could be helpful to take with you something to explain that you have recently had a nuclear medicine scan. This could be your appointment letter or some other official confirmation from the department where you had your scan.

Your results

Your scan will be looked at by a specialist who will issue a report. The report will be sent to the doctor who requested your scan rather than to your GP. This is because the doctor who requested your scan will have all the results from other tests and will be able to tell you how the result of your brain scan affects your care.

Information about you

As part of your care, information will be shared between clinical staff, some of whom you may not meet. It may also be used to help train other staff. Information collected may also be used later on to help the department improve their quality of care, plan services or to research into new developments.

The pictures from your scan may be used to teach other healthcare workers, but your name and all other identification will be removed first. It won't be possible to identify you from the scan pictures.

All information will be treated as confidential and is not given to anyone who does not need it. If you have any concerns, please discuss these with the department.

More information

All the staff would like to make your visit as pleasant as possible. If you have any concerns, please talk to a member of the nuclear medicine staff.