DaTscan Brain Imaging

What is DaTscan?
DaTscan is a test that is used to look for dopamine transporters (DaT) in the brain. During the scan, pictures are taken of your brain to show how much dopamine is present. This test helps your doctor find the cause of tremors, such as Parkinson’s disease.

What about radiation?
The tracer medicine that allows us to take pictures of your brain contains a very small amount of radioactivity. This test will result in very low radiation exposure.

We will need to block the radioactivity from going to your thyroid gland. This will be done by having you take a potassium iodide pill before your scan appointment.

If you are breastfeeding, pregnant or think you might be, tell the radiologist or technologist before starting to prepare for the scan.

How do I prepare for this test?
You will have 2 appointments for this test.

- **Screening Appointment**: This visit will be about 2 weeks before your scan appointment. The length of the visit will be about 30 minutes. During the first appointment, you will be told about the test and how to prepare. Bring a list of all medicines you are taking, including any prescriptions or over the counter medicines, vitamins or herbs.

More on next page ➔
Scan Appointment: This is the day of the test. There are 2 parts to this test. First, you must get the tracer medicine and have it in your body for several hours. Then, you will have the scan. **You need to be back at the hospital 3½ hours after the tracer has been given to you for the scan.** You may still have some waiting time before the scan.

Screening Appointment
The scan will be explained and your instructions will be reviewed. You will be seen by a pharmacist to talk about any medicines you are taking.

- Be sure to **tell the pharmacist and the technologist if you:**
  - Are allergic to iodine
  - Have kidney or liver problems
  - Have been sensitive to DaTscan in the past
  - Are not able to lie flat for 35 minutes

- **To protect your thyroid** during the scan, you will be given a potassium iodide pill. Take this pill **the day of your scan appointment, one hour before your appointment.** The pill can be taken with juice and it can taste salty. There are no side effects from this pill.

- **Please ask if you have any questions or if you do not understand the instructions for taking the pill or what to expect during the scan.**

Scan Appointment
- **Take the potassium iodide pill with juice one hour before your appointment time.**
- You do not need to limit food or fluids before this scan.

Your test will be done in Nuclear Medicine. There are two parts to this appointment. Part one is getting the tracer. It must be in your body several hours before the scan. **Plan to be back at the hospital 3½ hours after you have received the tracer.**

- An IV will be started in your arm.
- You will need to drink a large cup of water to be sure you have enough fluid in your body before the tracer is added into your IV.
• The IV will be removed about 30 minutes later. The tracer medicine needs to circulate in your body for several hours. You will be told what time the scan will occur.

• When it is time for taking pictures of your brain, you will be in a scan room lying on a table on your back. Your head will be placed in a holder with straps on your chin and forehead to keep your head from moving. Your arms will be at your sides with a binder to support them. A knee cushion and blanket will make you more comfortable so that you can hold still. Pictures will take about 30 minutes.

• Your pictures will be checked before we let you go in case more pictures are needed.

After the Scan

• You should **drink extra fluids and go to the bathroom often for the next two days** to help clear the tracer medicine out of your body.

• You can resume your normal activity and diet.

• The results of your scan will be sent to your doctor and shared with you. If you have not heard about the results in 2 weeks, check with your doctor’s office.

Your Appointments

• Your 1st appointment, the screening appointment, has been scheduled at ________ on _____________________________. Expect that you will be at the hospital about 30 minutes for this appointment.

• Your 2nd appointment, the scan appointment, has been scheduled at ________ on _____________________________. Be sure to **take your iodide pill 1 hour before this appointment**. Expect that you will be at the hospital for 4 to 6 hours for this appointment.
**Your test is scheduled at:**

University Hospital, 410 West 10th Avenue, Columbus in the Nuclear Medicine department.

- Take the Doan Hall elevators to the 2nd floor. Report to Radiology Registration to the right of the elevators.
- If you need to change your appointment, call Radiology Scheduling at (614) 293-4333.
- If you have a question about your test, please call Nuclear Medicine at (614) 293-5774.

A DaTscan is an important test. Please ask your doctor or technologist if you have any questions.

- Talk to your doctor or others on your health care team if you have questions. You may request more written information from the Library for Health Information at (614) 293-3707 or email: health-info@osu.edu.