

# INSTRUCTIONS FOR YOUR PET/CT SCAN

## For Patients with Morning Appointments

### **The day before your scan:**

1. Avoid eating carbohydrates and sugar on the day before your scan. (Please see the attached diet instructions.)
2. If you are diabetic, please see the attached detailed instructions.
3. Do not exercise or participate in strenuous physical activity.
4. Keep warm for at least 24 hours before your scan. Stay in a warm environment or wear warm clothing. This helps the quality of the PET images.
5. A scheduler will call you to confirm your appointment.

### **The day of your scan:**

1. You must fast after midnight. This means nothing to eat or drink after midnight except water and your medications. Unless your doctor has told you to limit your fluid intake, please continue to drink plenty of water up to your exam time. It is important that you are well hydrated for your scan.
2. If you are taking any sedation for your exam, follow the instructions given to you by your doctor. Please bring the bottle of pills to your appointment. If you are scheduled to take a pill after arriving at the PET center, the technologist will tell you when to take it.
3. If you were asked to bring prior scans to be compared to your PET/CT scan, please make sure to do so.
4. **DRESS WARMLY** – even in summer months. Bring a sweatshirt/sweater. To get the best scan results, you must **not** be chilled prior to or during the preparation for your scan.

## For Patients with Afternoon Appointments

### **The day before your scan:**

1. Avoid eating carbohydrates and sugar beginning at **noon** on the day before your scan. (Please see the attached diet instructions.)
2. If you are diabetic, please see the attached detailed instructions.
3. Do not exercise or participate in strenuous physical activity.
4. Keep warm for at least 24 hours before your scan. Stay in a warm environment or wear warm clothing. This helps the quality of the PET images.
5. A scheduler will call you to confirm your appointment.

### **The day of your scan:**

1. You may eat a **light** breakfast the day of your scan (continue to avoid carbohydrates and sugars).
2. Breakfast must be **finished 6 hours** before your exam time.
3. Unless your doctor has told you to limit your fluid intake, you should drink plenty of water the day of your exam. It is important that you are well hydrated for your scan.
4. If you are taking any sedation for your exam, follow the instructions given to you by your doctor. Please bring the bottle of pills to your appointment. If you are scheduled to take a pill after arriving at the PET center, the technologist will tell you when to take it.
5. If you were asked to bring prior scans to be compared to your PET/CT scan, please make sure to do so.

6. **DRESS WARMLY** – even in summer months. Bring a sweatshirt/sweater. To get the best scan results, you must **not** be chilled prior to or during the preparation for your scan.

## IMPORTANT REMINDERS FOR *ALL* PATIENTS:

1. Tell the scheduler if you are pregnant, a nursing mother, claustrophobic, diabetic, or if you have any special needs.
2. Wear comfortable clothes to your appointment. Dress warmly and bring a sweater/sweatshirt. Wear clothes without metal. If necessary, a gown will be provided. Please leave all jewelry at home or you will be asked to remove the jewelry.
3. Your visit will last approximately 2-1/2 hours including check-in, uptake, and scan time.
4. You can bring music to listen to during the imaging phase of your exam.
5. Most patients will receive several cups of oral contrast to drink prior to the scan. This helps to outline the bowel on the scan. Tell the technologist if you have had any previous problems with oral or IV contrast.
6. Accurate interpretation of your scan requires knowing a number of details about your condition and your medical history. Before the exam, the technologist will need to obtain a fairly detailed history. It will make this process easier and more accurate if you bring a list of the following to your appointment:
  - a. All medications you are taking
  - b. All surgeries or other major medical procedures you have had, including dates
  - c. Chemotherapy treatments you have had, including date of the last therapy
  - d. Radiation therapy treatments, including dates and what part of the body was treated
  - e. Any other types of cancer treatments you have been given
  - f. Any bone marrow stimulant medications you are on, and last date given
  - g. Any recent imaging studies (CT, PET/CT, MRI, etc.) you have had
7. If you will not be able to make your PET/CT scan appointment or if you have any questions about your exam, please contact Texas Oncology at least 24 hours before your exam.

# PET/CT SCAN DIET INSTRUCTIONS

Avoid food and drinks that contain sugar or carbohydrates for at least 24 hours before your scan. This will help to make sure that your images are of the best quality and help prevent having to reschedule your scan because of a blood sugar that is too high.

**Here are examples of foods that should be avoided for 24 hours before your PET/CT exam:**

## Sugars

Fruit or Fruit Juice  
Soft Drinks  
Jellies  
Coffee  
Yogurt  
Desserts  
Candy  
Alcohol of any kind

## Starches/carbohydrates

Bread/Rolls/Cakes/Tortillas  
Rice/Pasta/Crackers  
Potatoes or Corn  
Snack chips (corn, potato, popcorn)  
Pastries  
Oatmeal or any cereal  
Pizza Dough

**Your evening meal should consist of proteins with no starchy vegetables. No dessert or fruit should be consumed with dinner either.**

## Here are examples of foods that are allowed for dinner or breakfast prior to your scan:

Proteins and Vegetables  
Fish (Tuna or grilled fillets)  
Chicken (avoid breading or fried chicken)  
Pork (including bacon and ham)  
Eggs  
Cheese and Milk  
Beans  
Non-starchy vegetables (no potatoes or corn)  
Nuts (not honey roasted)

# ADDITIONAL PET/CT INSTRUCTIONS FOR DIABETIC PATIENTS

The PET scan uses a small amount of a radioactive compound called **FDG** that is very similar to glucose. This allows us to make images of the metabolic activity within your body's tissues and any possible tumors that might be present. Because FDG is so similar to glucose, the balance between blood sugar levels and insulin levels can have a big effect on the quality of the PET images, which can have a big effect on the ability to detect tumors on the images. This can be a tricky process, because **either** a high blood sugar level or a high insulin level can lead to very poor image quality and false information on the scans. The goal is to plan your food intake and medication dosage so that your insulin level is fairly low, but your blood sugar level is not too high. This is usually accomplished by making sure that you have not eaten and have not taken your medications shortly before your PET/CT scan.

The technologist will check your blood sugar before the PET/CT exam can begin. Your blood sugar must be under **200 mg/dL**. If not, your exam will be rescheduled. Always test your blood sugar before taking insulin or oral diabetic medications. You may need less than your usual dosage because of the low-carbohydrate diet and fasting.

As a general rule, diabetic patients must be **fasting** (meaning you can only drink water) for at least **six hours** prior to the PET/CT scan. You must **not** have taken **insulin** within **four hours** prior to the scan. There is no single approach to managing food intake and medication dosages that works in every patient. It sometimes requires several attempts to get your blood sugar in the appropriate range for the PET/CT scan. In general, there are two scheduling plans that seem to work best in most patients.

For many patients, simply **fasting after midnight**, drinking only water, and **not** taking **insulin** prior to an early-morning PET/CT scan appointment works well. If you take oral medications to control your blood sugar, please take your medication unless this causes your blood sugar to drop too low. If you think it may drop too low, take half your usual medication dose. However, if you already know that your blood sugar runs over 150 mg/dL in the morning after you wake up and before you take your medications, make sure to let the person scheduling your PET/CT appointment know. This approach may not work well for you and your scan may have to be scheduled differently. This is especially likely if you are on insulin.

The other common approach is to schedule your PET/CT appointment for early in the afternoon. In this case, you must get up early enough to eat a light breakfast at least **six hours** before your scheduled PET/CT scan time. It is preferred that you take your insulin and/or oral medications at least **six hours** (minimum **four hours**) before your scan. You can then have only water until your PET/CT scan.

Patients using insulin pumps will be asked to turn them off or set them to the "fasting" or "overnight" setting for four hours prior to the PET/CT. If this is not possible, you must tell the technologist how much insulin your pump delivered during the four hours.

**Remember** that you may need to decrease your medication dosages, especially your insulin dosage, because of the low-carbohydrate diet and the necessary fasting, especially if you are prone to having problems with low blood sugars. If you sometimes need to take glucose paste or oral glucose solution because of low blood sugar, bring some to your appointment, in case you need it. Once you arrive at the PET center, tell the technologist **immediately** if you begin to feel like your blood sugar is too low.