



Patient & Family Guide
2016

Having a PET (Positron Emission Tomography) Scan

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www.nshealth.ca

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Positron Emission Tomography in cancer

A Positron Emission Tomography (PET) scan is an imaging test showing how an organ or tissue works. MRI and CT scans are different than a PET scan because they show the structure (shape or makeup) of organs or tissue inside your body.

PET scans can help healthcare providers diagnose many conditions, find early stages of diseases like cancers, injuries, and infections, and see abnormalities even without seeing structural changes. This helps in choosing the best treatment for you.

The information from a PET scan can also help your healthcare provider decide what combination of surgery, radiation therapy, and chemotherapy is most likely to help treat your cancer. PET can also help check if therapy is working, and help plan for surgery and radiotherapy.

What will the test be like?

When having a PET scan, you will get an injection of a radioactive chemical called ^{18}F -FDG. This is made up of sugar and will collect in most cancerous tumours. After this injection, you will need to lie down and rest for about an hour, while the radioactive sugar flows around your body. Sugar naturally goes to muscles that are moving, so to stop your muscles from taking up the radioactive sugar and hiding the view of any tumour, it is important to lie very still during this time. We will then take pictures. Most patients will spend about 2-3 hours at the PET Centre.



Most claustrophobic patients find this test quite easy; please call us at 902-473-5971 if you have any concerns.

How do I get ready?

You will need to fast (not eat or drink anything except water) for 5 hours before your PET scan. The concentration of the radioactive sugar in the tumour is affected by the amount of natural sugar in your blood. This is particularly important for diabetic patients.

If you have problems with your blood sugar or other questions, please call and leave a message at 902-473-5971 and a technologist will call you back.

A preparation sheet may be sent to you or you can find it on our website at:

www.cdha.nshealth.ca/diagnostic-imaging

Choose the “PET Centre” tab from the left side of the webpage. This page will give you all the information you need for your PET scan.

How do we take the pictures?

The PET scanner finds the radiation released from the radioactive sugar injection and uses this to create pictures of your body. These pictures will take between 20–40 minutes, depending on the body area being scanned.

When will the test results be ready?

The results of the PET scan should be with your healthcare provider within a few days. You will need to contact your healthcare provider to get the results.

Are there any risks?

The PET scan is a very safe and routine test. Millions of PET scans have been done around the world without any problems.

It is important to tell the technologist before the test if you are pregnant or breastfeeding.

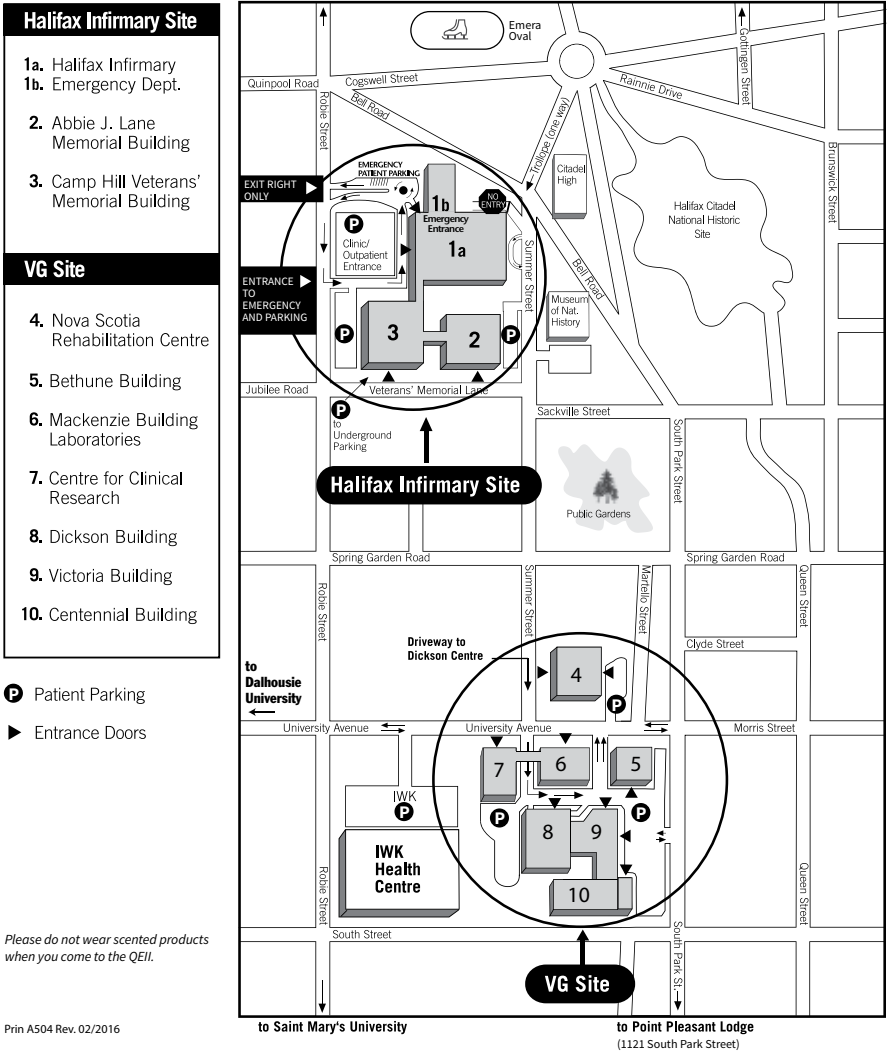
The amount of radioactivity you get during this test is small. You will not need to stay away from your family, children, or the public. By the end of the day all of the radioactive sugar will be out of your body.

If you have any questions, please ask.

We are here to help you.

QEII Health Sciences Centre

is made up of 10 buildings located on two sites



PET Centre
5780 University Avenue
Victoria Building, Victoria General Hospital
2nd Floor North, Suite 2041
Halifax, Nova Scotia B3H 2Y9
902-473-5971 (Voicemail: please leave a
message)
www.cdha.nshealth.ca/diagnostic-imaging

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For more information go to <http://library.novascotia.ca>

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Nova Scotia Health Authority

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The information is not intended to be and does not constitute healthcare or medical advice.

If you have any questions, please ask your healthcare provider.

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The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.