

Your DaTSCAN explained (NBTRS)

Please read this patient information carefully as it contains information on preparing for the scan

Reference Number: ULHT-LFT-0256 v9

Issued: March 2026

Review Date: March 2028

Aim of the patient information

This patient information is for patients having a DaTSCAN. It aims to tell you what a DaTSCAN is and to tell you what will happen.

General information

A doctor has asked that we take some pictures of your brain to assess how well specific areas are working.

As the test involves small amounts of radiation, we ask that you are **not** accompanied by children under 18 or anyone who may be pregnant. You may bring one adult with you to the department.

If the appointment clashes with another outpatient appointment or test, or you are unable to attend on this day, please contact the Nuclear Medicine department on the number provided as soon as possible. We can then reschedule the test and assign the appointment to another patient.

If you have mobility issues, are incontinent or claustrophobic please contact the department on the number provided.

Benefit and risks of the test

Everyone receives some radiation every day from the radioactivity in the air, food we eat and even from space. The amount of radiation received from this test is similar to your natural exposure over two years. The risks linked with this are low.

The main benefit of the test is making the correct diagnosis, so that you can get the treatment that is right for you. This benefit is far greater than the small risk from radiation.

If you have any concerns, please contact the department in advance or ask to speak to someone on the day of your scan.

Preparation

If you are pregnant or breastfeeding, you must inform the department as quickly as possible as special arrangements may have to be made.

If you are taking any of the medication listed below, you must contact your consultant to discuss the changes that need to be made to medication at least 2 weeks prior to the test. Several medications may interfere with the scan.

Medication list

Amphetamine	Isoflurane (<i>Isoflurane, Aerrane</i>)
Armodafinil	Ketamine (<i>Ketalar</i>)
Bupropion/Amfebutamone (<i>Zyban</i>)	Mazindol
Cannabidiol	Methylamphetamine
Cocaine	Methylphenidate (<i>Ritalin, Concerta, Equasym</i>)
Codeine	Modafinil (<i>Provigil</i>)
Dexamethylphenidate	Pethidine (<i>Pamergan</i>)
Dextamphetamine (<i>Dexedrine</i>)	Phencyclidine
Ephedrine	Phentermine
Fentanyl (<i>Sublimaze, Actiq, Durogesic</i>)	Sertraline (<i>Lustral</i>)
Haloperidol	

Please bring a list of any medication that you are taking (your repeat prescription sheet if possible).

What does the test involve?

There are two parts to this test.

Part 1

When you arrive in the department you may be given liquid potassium iodide to drink, either from a syringe or a cup. An hour later, you will receive a small injection into one of the veins in your hand or arm. The procedure is very similar to having a blood sample taken. There should be no ill effects from the injection. The injection takes 3 to 4 hours to circulate. During this time, you are free to leave the department if you wish.

Part 2

Once the injection has circulated, you will need to return to the department and will be asked to lie flat on a couch whilst the camera takes pictures (see photos below). The pictures normally take approximately 50 minutes. You will then be free to leave the department.



After the test

For the rest of the day, you must take extra care to wash your hands thoroughly after toilet use, sit down when you use the toilet and to flush the toilet twice. You must also continue to drink extra fluids and empty your bladder frequently. This will improve the clearance of the radiation from your body.

When the test is completed, the images will be reviewed, and a report will be available to the doctor who has requested the test.

Radiation information

If you would like to find out more about medical radiation, please access the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/medical-radiation-uses-dose-measurements-and-safety-advice>

The camera

The Gamma Camera used to take the pictures has an open design and the majority of patients complete the test without any discomfort.

Contact details

If you have any questions about any of this information, please contact the Nuclear Medicine Department on 01522 573103.

United Lincolnshire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust has worked with AccessAble to create detailed Access Guides to facilities, wards and departments at our sites.

www.accessable.co.uk/united-lincolnshire-hospitals-nhs-trust

United Lincolnshire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust endeavours to ensure that the information given here is accurate and impartial.

If you require this information in another language or alternative format, please email the Patient Information team at ulth.patient.information@nhs.net