



Banner Alzheimer's Institute

Frequently Asked Questions

Positron Emission Tomography (PET) Scan at Banner Brain Imaging

Your physician has recommended you undergo a positron emission tomography (PET) scan. You no doubt have questions about PET scans. The Banner Brain Imaging team has developed this document to answer those questions and prepare you for your PET scan.

To schedule an appointment for a PET scan or to change your appointment, call Banner Brain Imaging at (602) 839-7700.

What is a PET scan?

A PET scan is a non-invasive imaging test that uses a radioactive substance called a tracer to detect disease or injury in the brain. The tracer remains in the body for only a short time, and the small amount of radiation causes no known side effects.

Will my insurance cover the cost of a PET scan?

Contact your insurance provider to ask about your coverage. You'll also need to learn if your insurance plan requires pre-authorization for a PET scan. If so, your referring physician will need to provide documentation that outlines the medical necessity of the procedure to your insurance provider.

Our team is glad to assist by billing your insurance provider. However, patients are responsible for costs not covered by their insurance plans.

Questions? Please contact the Banner Brain Imaging PET Center at (602) 839-4229.

How do I prepare for a PET scan?

Here are important instructions to help you get ready for your PET scan.

- *Pregnant or Breastfeeding* – Tell your physician if you think you may be pregnant or if you're breastfeeding. It's best not to expose a fetus or infant to unnecessary radiation, even a tiny amount.
- *Medications* – Provide your doctor a list of your current medications, including dosage and frequency. Your physician, or a Banner Alzheimer's Institute team member, will discuss any necessary diet or medication changes before your PET scan.
- *Diabetes* – If you have diabetes, please call the Banner Brain Imaging PET Center at (602) 839-4229 for instructions the week prior to your scheduled PET exam.
- *Comfortable Clothing* – On the day of your PET scan, please wear loose, comfortable clothing.

How long does a PET scan take?

Please allow two or three hours for your PET scan, even though you won't be in the scanner for that length of time.

May I bring someone with me to the exam?

A family member or friend (no small children, please) is welcome to stay with you as long as possible before the exam. A Banner Brain Imaging team member will tell your family member or friend when the test is about to begin so he or she can go to the waiting area.

What happens during the PET scan?

First, PET scans are painless. You may only have some momentary discomfort when the tracer is given through an IV. Once the tracer is absorbed by your body, you'll lie on a narrow table which will slide into a tunnel-shaped scanner. You must lie still during the test so that the machine can produce clear images of your brain.

The Banner Brain Imaging team will do everything possible to make sure you're comfortable. Please feel free to ask questions and tell us how you're feeling.

Will I be able to get back to my routine after the PET scan?

Yes, once the scan is complete, you may resume normal activities. We recommend drinking plenty of fluids and urinating frequently to help eliminate the tracer from your body.

How do I get the results of my PET scan?

A Banner Brain Imaging physician will interpret your PET scan and create a report for the physician who referred you for the exam. That doctor will contact you to discuss the results of the PET scan.