

UW Medicine



PET/CT F18 Fluoride Bone Scan

How to prepare and what to expect

A PET/CT F18 fluoride bone scan is a nuclear medicine scan. This handout explains how to prepare for the scan, how it is done, what you may feel during the scan, and how to get your results.

What is a PET F18 fluoride bone scan?

PET stands for *positron emission tomography*. A PET bone scan is an imaging test that uses a radioactive substance called a *tracer* to look for disease in the body.

F18 fluoride is the tracer that will be used for your bone scan.

PET F18 fluoride bone scans are done most often to detect *metastatic bone disease* (cancer that has spread from an organ to the bone).

A PET/CT camera takes 2 types of pictures:

- The PET scan shows where the tracer has collected in your body.
- The CT (*computed tomography*) scan provides detailed pictures of your body's tissue and structures.

How do I prepare?

- Drink plenty of fluids the day of your scan.
- If you have had any other scans in other clinics in the last 12 months, we may ask you to bring those results with you.

How is the scan done?

- A technologist will help you get ready for the scan and will place an *intravenous* (IV) line in your arm. An IV line is a thin tube used to give you medicine and fluids. The technologist will inject the tracer into the IV.



The radiologist will review your PET/CT scan and send the results to your provider who referred you for the scan.

- You will relax for about 80 minutes while the tracer moves through your body.
- Next, you will go to the PET scan area. We will ask you to lie on your back on a table while the scan is being done.
- Most scans take about 1 hour. The scan will cover your whole body from head to toe. A CT scan that doesn't use contrast will also be done over the same area.
- If your provider has requested it, you may also have a CT scan that uses contrast. This will be done on the PET/CT camera after your PET scan.

What will I feel before and during the scan?

- You may feel some discomfort when the IV is placed.
- During the scan, you must relax and not move. Holding still may be hard for some patients.
- You should not feel anything from the tracer being in your body. The radioactivity will be gone within a day.

After the Scan

After the scan, be sure to drink plenty of fluids. This will help your body get rid of the tracer more quickly.

Who interprets the results and how do I get them?

A radiologist or nuclear medicine doctor will read your PET scan. This doctor will also review the other scan results you may have brought with you.

Your provider who referred you for the PET scan will give you your scan results. Your provider should receive the results from the radiologist or nuclear medicine doctor within 3 days.

You may also read your results on your eCare Results page. If you need copies of your images on disc, call 206.598.6206.

You and your provider will decide the next step, such as treatment for a problem, as needed.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

- UWMC Imaging Services: 206.598.6200
- Harborview Imaging Services - PET: 206.744.0113
- Seattle Cancer Care Alliance: 206.606.7200