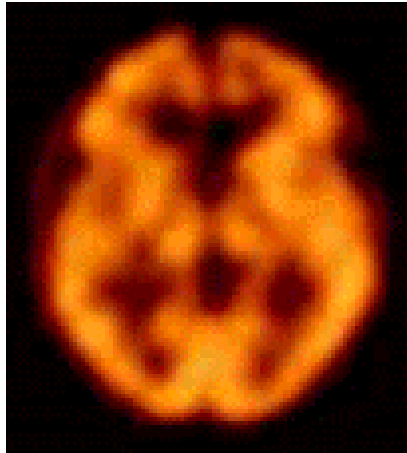


# A PATIENT'S GUIDE TO A SPECT BRAIN SCAN



## Introduction

A Brain Scan is a way for your physician to see how blood is flowing through different areas of your brain. This brochure was written to help you further understand a Brain Scan and to answer questions most frequently asked by people scheduled for SPECT Brain Imaging Studies.

## Why does my doctor want me to have a SPECT Brain Scan?

A SPECT Brain Scan can show how well the various regions of your brain are functioning. This information can help your doctor make a more accurate diagnosis.

If I have already had x-rays, a computed tomography (CT) scan, and/or a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scan, why do I still need another test?

To fully evaluate a patient's symptoms, information on both the brain's structure (anatomy) and its blood supply is often necessary. CT and MRI scans provide detailed information on the structure of the brain. However, in many patients the symptoms cannot be completely explained by anatomic changes, or these scans may appear normal. A Brain Scan can often give your physician important information on blood flow that would not be available through these other diagnostic techniques. The best diagnosis for some patients is made only after evaluating the blood flow to various areas of the brain and comparing these to normal patterns. The changes that may be detected on Brain SPECT studies are diagnostic of some diseases. When doctors combine information on your brain's anatomy and function, they have a more complete understanding of what may be causing your symptoms. A Brain Scan can also be used to evaluate the success of various treatments.

## Can I eat or drink before the exam?

**Yes!** A Brain Scan does not require fasting, special diets, or medication. If you are not in the hospital, you can continue your regular work schedule, and lifestyle. Many people drive to the hospital or clinic, park, and walk in for the Brain Scan.

## What can I expect?

On the day of the exam you will check in at the Nuclear Medicine Department. A doctor or Nuclear Medicine Technologist will ask you some important questions such as: Do you have a history of head injury, seizures, or stroke? Next, the technologist will have you lie on your back in a quiet, darkened room, which may or may not be the examination room. An intravenous catheter or needle will be placed in a vein in your arm or hand, and a radiopharmaceutical will be injected soon afterward. You will then be asked to continue lying quietly for another 10 to 20 minutes. When it is time for the examination, you will lie down on the padded examination table. The SPECT Gamma camera, capable of imaging the areas of your brain where the radiopharmaceutical has accumulated, will be moved near your head. The closer the camera is to your head, the better the images of the blood flowing in your brain will be.

## Is the radiopharmaceutical a dye?

**No.** It is a radioactive agent that will localize in an area of the brain and will be imaged with a camera.

## How long will the exam take?

You will be imaged shortly after injection of the radiopharmaceutical. Preparation may take about a half-hour, and the SPECT imaging procedure takes about a half-hour.

## Procedure for a SPECT Brain Scan

The SPECT Gamma camera will take a series of pictures of your head that will show how well blood flows through the various areas of your brain. The only noise you will hear will be the mechanical rotation of the camera, which is only a slight noise. There are no loud noises associated with the examination.

## Will I feel anything during the exam?

Not a thing; the SPECT Brain Scan is painless. It is very important for you to be comfortable before the Scan begins. **It is also very important that you remain as still as possible during the examination to avoid having to repeat the study. Moving your head during the Scan will make interpretation of your brain images difficult by the physician. If the study is difficult to interpret, it will have to be repeated.**

## Following the exam

You may go home and continue your regular activities.

## When will I get the results of my exam?

A report describing the findings of your SPECT Brain Scan will be sent to your physician. You should make an appointment with your referring doctor to obtain the results of your Scan.

## Who can answer any other questions I might have?

Your personal physician, or a physician, nurse, or Technologist in the Nuclear Medicine Department.

*This information is not a substitute for an informed discussion between you and your physician. Consult your physician if you need more information on the procedures and drugs used in this pamphlet.*

<b>Your exam will take place:</b>
Location: _____
Date: _____ Time: _____ Phone: _____
ReturnTime: _____
<b><u>Instructions:</u></b> _____
_____
_____
_____

If you require further information about your test or wish to change your appointment, please call the phone number listed above.

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