

Having a Brain Perfusion Scan



A brain perfusion scan is a type of brain test that shows the amount of blood in certain areas of your brain. This can help show how your brain is functioning. The areas of the brain that are very active often show greater blood supply, oxygen supply, and use of glucose. Tracking these things can show which areas of your brain are most active. These things may be lower in areas of the brain that are injured or not very active.

What to tell your healthcare provider

Tell your healthcare provider about your health conditions and all the medicines you take. This includes prescription medicines, over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and other supplements. Also tell your healthcare provider about any changes in your health, such as a recent illness or fever.

Make sure to tell your healthcare provider if you are pregnant or may be pregnant. If so, you may need to delay your test if your scan will use radiation. This is because radiation may pose a risk to your unborn child. Also let your healthcare provider know if you are breastfeeding.

Getting ready for your test

- Follow any directions you are given for taking medicines and for not eating or drinking before the test. You may be told to stay away from caffeine, alcohol, or other medicines known to affect the blood flow in your brain.
- Talk with your healthcare provider if you feel stress when you are in small spaces. Certain types of scanners may cause stress to some people.
- Your healthcare provider may give you more directions for the type of scan you are having.

On the day of your test

Before your test, you'll need to remove any metal objects. This includes jewelry, barrettes, and eyeglasses.

Each person's brain perfusion scan can vary. Your healthcare provider can tell you how your scan will be done. In general, you can expect the following:

- You will lie down on the exam table.
- In some cases, a technician or nurse will put an intravenous (IV) into a vein in your hand or arm.
- A healthcare provider will give you a radiotracer if you are having a PET/CT scan or they will give you IV contrast dye if you are having a standard CT scan. These substances help show blood flow in your brain.
- If you are given a radiotracer, it may take an hour or so for the tracer to travel through your body. You'll rest quietly during this time.
- You'll move into the scanner for your imaging. It's important that you remain very still during the scanning. You may be told to take a breath and hold it for a short period of time.
- You might have one or more different scans while you are inside the scanner.

After your test

You'll likely be able to go home soon after your scan, unless you are staying in the hospital for ongoing care. Your IV line will be removed if it's no longer needed.

You can likely go back to your normal activities right after your scan. Your healthcare provider will let you know if you need to take any special care.

The small amount of tracer in your body will quickly lose its radioactivity. Your body will soon remove it through your urine and stool. Drink plenty of water in the hours after the test. This will help flush out the remaining radioactive tracer or contrast dye in your body.

Follow-up care

A radiologist will read and interpret your scan. These results are then sent to your healthcare provider. Ask them when you can expect to learn the results of your scan. You and your healthcare provider can use the results to help decide on your treatment plan.

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