



## Positron Emission Tomography (PET) Scan

### *Without sedation*

#### **Our Mission**

Nicklaus Children's Hospital' mission is to inspire hope and promote lifelong health by providing the best care to every child. We focus on family-centered care in order to provide an optimal experience for patients and their families. We believe that parents and guardians play a vital role in the success of this test and want you to have an active role in your child's healthcare. The following information is to help prepare both you and your child for the scheduled exam.

#### **What is a PET scan?**

- A Positron Emission Tomography (PET) scan is a type of camera that is used along with a Computed Tomography (CT) scan to take detailed pictures inside the body.
- A PET scan is often used to help find a diagnosis, treatment plan, and/or see how a treatment plan is working.
- Because this test uses radiation, *women who are pregnant are not permitted in the room during the scan.* Please bring another adult who can stay with your child during the scan.
- During a PET scan, *a safe, small dose* of a radioactive pharmaceutical is administered to highlight any areas of abnormal cell activity.
- *Some* PET scans are also ordered with an "oral contrast" that your child will drink. The oral contrast also acts as a tracer to help the doctor see the body in greater details.
- *PET scans are not painful.* The bed moves slowly through the tunnel and the camera remains around your child, never touching. A lot of children say the camera looks like a spaceship or a doughnut!
- In order to get the best results, it is very important that your child *holds still* for the scan.
- A PET scan takes can take up to 60 minutes to complete.
- *In certain cases*, patients who are unable to hold still to complete the scan will be re-scheduled for a future scan under general anesthesia.

#### **What to Expect the Day of the Exam**

##### **Step 1: Getting Ready**

- You and your child will be walked from the waiting room to an exam room where a nurse who will provide a hospital gown, take your child's vital signs and ask general questions about your child's health.
- *Please feel free to bring your child's favorite toy or activity to provide distraction while in the exam room.*
- From there, a nurse will gently place an IV, (a small, plastic, straw) into your child's vein in the hand or arm. The IV straw will help give your child the radioisotope and fluids needed throughout the PET scan.

##### Tips:

- *Numbing medicine may be used (if applicable) to help make your child's IV placement as comfortable as possible.*



- *If the PET scan is also ordered with oral contrast, your child will also begin drinking the contrast during this time.*

### **Step 2: Warming Up**

- In order for the PET scan to take clear pictures and for the Radiopharmaceutical to work, it is important for your child to stay warm. After the IV is placed, a member of the team will provide your child with warm blankets.
- During this time, the nuclear medicine technologist will place the radiopharmaceutical into your child's IV.
- The radiopharmaceutical takes about 60 minutes to work before it is time to begin the scan.
- You and your child are welcome to watch TV or play with an item brought from home while waiting in the exam room.

### **Step 3: Pictures**

- After the 60 minutes have passed, you and your child will be walked to the PET scan room.
- Your child will be helped onto the bed of the scanner and secured into place with a safety strap.
- *The child may be accompanied by up to two adults during the scan. Any other accompanying children must wait with an adult in the waiting room.* Please plan to have someone available if bringing other children.

### **Step 4: Results**

- Results will be sent to your doctor within 1 to 2 business days.

### ***Child Life Specialists***

A part of the Child Life Specialist's role in the Radiology Department is to help children and families cope with the anxiety and fear associated with medical procedures. A Child Life Specialist may be available on the day of the exam to provide education and coping strategies. For more information, please contact Nicklaus Children's Hospital's Children's Experiences Department at 305-666-6511 extension 4875 and select #1.



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