IMAGING: FDG-PET SCAN

This procedure detects active malignant lesions, including lung cancer, colorectal cancer, lymphoma, melanoma, breast cancer, ovarian cancer, brain cancer and multiple myeloma. FDG-PET scans may also be used to stage and monitor the response to therapy of malignant disease.

What to expect

- Before the exam:
  The patient must fast six hours before the appointment time. Only plain water may be taken. Carbohydrates must be avoided (e.g., bread, pasta, potato and rice) 24 hours before the appointment time. Carbohydrates (sugars) taken before the test reduce its effectiveness.

- During the exam:
  The patient receives an intravenous injection of a tracer dose of radioactive material. The level of radioactivity is extremely low and has no side effects. The patient waits approximately 1 1/2 hours before the scan begins. The scan takes approximately one hour. During that time, the patient is required to lie flat on the back without moving. Using a special nuclear medicine scanner, pictures of the body are taken. The scanner does not produce any radiation. It simply detects and records the distribution of the radioactive material in the body.

- After the exam:
  There are no post-exam instructions.

IMAGING: GALLIUM SCAN

A gallium scan is a multiple-day procedure. Its purpose is to diagnose, stage and follow up malignant (cancerous) tumors, including lymphoma, leukemia, lung cancer, melanoma and sarcoma. Gallium scans are also used to diagnose and evaluate patients with infection in the body, including pneumonia, abscess, osteomyelitis, sarcoidosis and fever of unknown origin.

What to expect

- Before the exam:
  There are no pre-exam instructions.

- During the exam:
  On the first visit, the patient receives an intravenous injection (in the vein) of a tracer dose of radioactive material. The level of radioactivity is extremely low and has no side effects. If the study is to see tumors, the patient is scanned two and three days after the injection. If the study is to see infection, the patient is scanned at one and two days after the injection. The first scan day takes one hour and the second scan day takes two hours. Depending on the scan results, the patient may need to return one additional day for a one-hour scan. During these exams, the patient lies on the back without moving. Using a special nuclear medicine camera, the technologist takes pictures of the area being studied. The camera does not produce any radiation. It simply detects and records the distribution of the radioactive material in the body.

- After the exam:
  There are no post-exam instructions.