PET - Positron Emission Tomography

Overview
PET imaging provides a special 3D picture of the body. First a small amount of sugar solution is injected into the patient’s vein. This special sugar, called fluoro-deoxyglucose (FDG), is “labeled” with fluorine-18, which emits positrons. The PET camera records these emissions, much like light exposes a photographic film. Tissues which burn a lot of sugar, including muscle and brain, appear bright. In addition, many cancers appear very bright and are easily detected. PET can effectively pinpoint the source of many of the most common cancers, heart and neurological diseases, and may eliminate the need for additional tests and surgery. In addition to standard PET imaging at Radiology Associates offers the latest PET-CT fusion technology, where a CT scan and PET scan are performed simultaneously and the images merged on a computer.

How is the procedure performed?
You will go to a preparation area where a PET technologist will start an IV in your arm. A small amount of FDG will be injected through the IV. You will rest quietly for 30 minutes so that your muscles will not use up the special sugar. You will be taken to the PET-CT scan room and asked to lie down on the scan table.

What preparation is needed?
Follow the detailed directions given to you when scheduling for this PET exam. Directions include:

1. No strenuous exercise for 24 hours.
2. Nothing to eat or drink 12 hours prior to exam (includes coffee, gum, breath mints, etc.) except water.
3. High protein, low sugar diet for 24 hours prior to exam.
4. Arrive 15 minutes early for registration.
5. Total time for entire procedure is 1 to 1 1/2 hours (about 30 minutes on the scan table)
6. Please give 24 hours notice to cancel exam as the FDG sugar is ordered the night prior to the exam.

What should I wear?
Wear comfortable, loose-fitting clothing. You may be asked to change into a patient gown or scrubs.

How long will the PET scan take?
The PET scan will take about 30 minutes but you will need to set aside 1 1/2 – 2 hours for the exam.

What can I expect after the exam?
You may return to your normal activities following the exam. There will be no side-effects from the injected glucose.

When will my physician get the results?
One of our radiologists will study the images and send a written report to your physician within one to two business days.