NEUROLOGY GROUP of BERGEN COUNTY

DaTscan

DaTscan is an imaging drug that will be injected into the bloodstream to help your doctor assess a chemical involved in controlling movement, called dopamine. A special device, called a gamma camera, will take pictures of your brain. These pictures and a report will be sent to your doctor, who can discuss the test results with you. The DaTscan test will be performed in the nuclear medicine department of The Valley Hospital. DaTscan is for adult patients who have signs or symptoms of Parkinsonian syndromes, such as shaking or stiffness. DaTscan is available only with a prescription from your doctor, and only your doctor can decide if this test is right for you.

How to Prepare for a DaTscan Test

Be sure to follow your doctor's orders when preparing for this test.

Tell your doctor if you:

- Have any allergies or other medical conditions
- Are pregnant, nursing, or planning to become pregnant
- Have reduced kidney or liver function

Tell your doctor if you are currently taking any of the following drugs:

- Drugs for the treatment of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) or Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) (e.g., Adderall XR®, Ritalin®)
- Antipsychotics
- Antidepressants (e.g., Wellbutrin®, Zoloft®)
- Cocaine
- Weight-loss medications or appetite suppressants
- Smoking cessation medications

On the day of the test:

- Drink plenty of fluids and go to the bathroom frequently before your DaTscan test. (and for two days afterwards)
- Wear loose, comfortable clothing because you will have to lie still for a period of time.
- Bring a list of **all** the medications you are taking

What to expect during the test:

The entire process takes several hours. The test will be performed by a specially trained healthcare professional; this may be a doctor, nurse, or technologist.

- At least one hour before the DaTscan dose, you will receive another drug to prevent the iodine in DaTscan from going into your thyroid, which may increase the risk of a type of thyroid cancer.
- Before the test begins, DaTscan will be injected through an intravenous (IV) line in your arm. Because it takes time for DaTscan to be appropriately distributed in the body, you will need to wait three to six hours after this injection for the imaging test to begin.
- For the imaging test, you will be asked to lie on a table and the healthcare professional will position you on a headrest. A strip of tape, or some other flexible restraint, may be placed across your forehead or chin to prevent your head from moving during the test.
- A camera will be positioned above you. It will be very close to your head, but it should not touch you. You must try to remain as still as possible while the camera takes pictures. (about 30 minutes)