

Computed Tomography (CT) scan

Radiology

Introduction

The leaflet tells you about having a Computed Tomography (CT) scan. It explains what is involved and what the possible risks are. It is not meant to replace informed discussion between you and your Doctor.

What is a CT scan?

A CT scan, is carried out by using a special X-ray machine which produces an image of a cross-section, or 'slice' of the body. The scanner consists of a 'doughnut'-shaped structure through which you pass on a couch.

A narrow beam of X-rays are produced from inside the gantry, and rotate in a complete circle around you. The X-rays pass through your body and are detected on the other side, the information passes to a computer which then produces a picture of the internal structure of your body.

Are there any risks?

CT scanning involves X-rays. The amount of radiation used is more than an ordinary X-ray of the chest or body. Despite this, your Doctors believe it is advisable that you should have this examination, as there are likely to be greater risks from missing a serious disorder by not having it.

If you wish to know more about the radiation used in medical examinations, information can be found on the Health Protection Agency website: www.hpa.org.uk

Are you pregnant?

Female patients who are, or might be, pregnant must inform a member of staff prior to your examination.

Many CT examinations involve you having a contrast dye injected into a vein in order to increase the amount of information obtained from the scan. The injection can cause side effects for a minority of people:

- 3% of patients experience mild side effects including nausea and hot flushes
- 0.04% have more serious side effects including breathing difficulties

If a reaction is likely to occur it will be immediate, and Doctors, Nurses and Radiographers are trained to deal with these side effects.

The prevention of infection is a major priority in all healthcare and everyone has a part to play.

- Please decontaminate your hands frequently for 20 seconds using soap and water or alcohol gel if available
- If you have symptoms of diarrhoea and/or vomiting, cough or other respiratory symptoms, a temperature or any loss of taste or smell please do not visit the hospital or any other care facility and seek advice from 111
- Keep the environment clean and tidy
- Let's work together to keep infections out of our hospitals and care homes.

Occasionally the injection may leak out from the vein to the tissues under the skin: this is known as extravasation. If this has happened, you will experience a stinging sensation where the contrast has gone into the tissue and it can be painful. This usually wears off quite quickly; within 30 minutes and in most cases is a minor injury.

Can you bring a relative or friend?

Yes, but they will not be able to accompany you into the CT room.

What will happen before the scan?

The Radiographer will explain the procedure for your examination.

If you need to get undressed you will be shown to a private cubicle to get changed into an examination gown. You may wish to bring your own dressing gown to wear when in the waiting area.

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If your scan also involves the injection of contrast dye, a needle will be inserted into a vein in your arm or hand.

Depending on the examination type, you may be required to drink about 1 litre of water over a period of one hour. This will highlight your stomach and bowel.

What happens during the CT scan?

You will be taken into the special X-ray room and made comfortable lying on the couch. Straps and pillows may be used to help maintain the correct position during the exam. The couch will be moved slowly to position the part of your body under investigation within the 'doughnut'.

The Radiographers will move to the control room but you will be able to talk to them via an intercom, and they will be watching you all the time.

When you enter the CT scanner special lights may be used to ensure that you are properly positioned. With modern CT scanners, you will only hear slight buzzing, clicking and whirring sounds as the CT scanners revolve during the course of the procedures.

If you are having an injection, this will be given just prior to the start of the scan.

During the scan, you may be asked to hold your breath for a short time or not swallow while each image is being produced.

How long will it take?

The scanning process will take about 20 minutes, if you have an injection of dye you will be asked to have a seat in the waiting room for 30 minutes before the cannula is removed.

Unless you are delayed by having to wait, such as for an emergency patient, the total time in the department will be about 1½ hours.

When will you get the results?

We cannot give you the results of the scan on the day you attend. The scan will be reviewed and a written report sent to the Doctor who referred you.

Your Consultant will then arrange a follow up appointment to discuss the results of your scan.

Student Training

A student Radiographer may be present during the examination. If you would prefer them not to attend, please let the Supervising Radiographer know at the time of your examination.

Queries or cancellations

If you have any queries about your scan or wish to alter the appointment please contact the CT / MRI department on:

Tel: 01902 695924

English

If you need information in another way like easy read or a different language please let us know.

If you need an interpreter or assistance please let us know.

Lithuanian

Jeigu norėtumėte, kad informacija jums būtų pateikta kitu būdu, pavyzdžiui, supaprastinta forma ar kita kalba, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Jeigu jums reikia vertėjo ar kitos pagalbos, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Polish

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo otrzymać te informacje w innej postaci, na przykład w wersji łatwej do czytania lub w innym języku, prosimy powiedzieć nam o tym.

Prosimy poinformować nas również, jeżeli potrzebowaliby Państwo usługi tłumaczenia ustnego lub innej pomocy.

Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਵਿਚ ਆਸਾਨ ਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੂਜੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ, ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਦੁਭਾਸ਼ੀਏ ਦੀ ਜਾਂ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

Romanian

Dacă aveți nevoie de informații în alt format, ca de exemplu caractere ușor de citit sau altă limbă, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Dacă aveți nevoie de un interpret sau de asistență, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Traditional Chinese

如果您需要以其他方式了解信息，如易读或其他语种，请告诉我们。

如果您需要口译人员或帮助，请告诉我们。