

CT

A guide to your scan



What is a CT scan?

CT stands for computed tomography. It uses X-rays to produce a cross-sectional, or 'slice', image of the inside of your body.

Who will I see?

A small team of radiography staff will look after you during your visit and one of the radiographers will carry out the scan.

Is it safe?

The amount of radiation used varies. The radiation related risks are regarded as small and the risk of missing a serious problem if you don't have a CT scan may be much higher.

If you are or you think you may be pregnant, you should tell us before your scan.

Do I need an injection?

Many CT scans involve injecting a dye (known as a 'contrast medium') into a vein to increase the amount of information we can get from the scan. The injection may give you a warm feeling around your body and a metallic taste in your mouth. As with all injections, there is a very small risk of an allergic reaction, ranging from minor reactions such as a skin rash to the more serious such as an asthma attack. Our medical teams are trained to deal with this if it happens. If you have reacted to any other injection given for a kidney X-ray (IVP or IVU), coronary angiogram or a previous CT scan, please let the radiographer know before the injection takes place.

Before the scan

- We will ask you some safety questions when you book your appointment. If you require an injection, we will also ask you to fill in a safety questionnaire beforehand. Please remember to bring this with you to your appointment.
- To help show different organs in the body, some preparation may be necessary, and if necessary, your appointment letter will have information about this.
- You do not need to prepare specifically for scans of the brain or extremities, however we may ask you to drink a certain amount of fluid or a special drink before having an abdomen or pelvis scan.

There are a few instructions that you need to follow before the scan:

- You should not eat or drink if you have been told not to (this will only apply for some scans). If we need to, we will give you more details when you book your appointment.
- If you are a diabetic taking any tablets for this condition, please contact us before your appointment.
- You should tell us if you have any allergies or asthma or if you have reacted to any other injection given for a kidney X-ray (IVP or IVU), coronary angiogram or a previous CT scan.
- You should tell us if you are pregnant or breast feeding.
- You should wear comfortable, loose clothing.
- You should let us know about any special needs you have (for example if you need wheelchair access, you are hard of hearing, you have poor eyesight or you are claustrophobic).

What happens during my appointment?

- When you arrive you should go to the reception desk.
- The radiographer or another member of staff will meet you and explain the procedure to you.
- We will check your safety questionnaire (or ask you to fill one in if you haven't already).
- You will have the chance to ask any questions you have.
- For some types of CT scans we will ask you to drink a special contrast drink up to an hour before your scan.
- We may ask you to change into a gown.
- If you need to change, your clothes and personal items will be kept in a secure place.
- We may need to give you an injection, depending on the area that needs to be scanned.
- We will take you into the scanning room and ask you to lie down on the scanner bed.
- We will move the bed slowly so we can position the part of your body that is going to be scanned under the scanner camera.
- During the scan we may ask you to hold your breath or not swallow.
- The radiographer operating the scanner will be able to see and hear you throughout the procedure.



Will it be uncomfortable?

We will make you as comfortable as possible. The scan will not cause any pain. You may be given an injection.

How long will it take?

If you are given fluid to drink when you arrive, you may have to wait up to an hour before having your scan.

The scan may take up to 45 minutes.

After the scan

After your scan you can eat and drink normally.

If you have had an injection, we will ask you to wait in reception for 30 minutes after your examination in case you have a reaction to the injection.

You can drive home afterwards and return to work if you need to.

Are there any side effects?

There are no known side effects from having a CT scan, however there is a very small risk of a delayed allergy-like reaction to the dye (contrast medium). If you do develop any symptoms and are concerned, please contact us for advice, or out of hours contact your GP or nearest Accident and Emergency Department.

When will I get the results?

A radiologist will check the scan results shortly after your appointment and will send a report to your doctor or consultant. At the time of your appointment you will be told how long this should take.

If a follow up appointment is not already arranged, you will need to contact your doctor or consultant to make an appointment to get your results.

Can I bring a relative or friend with me?

Yes but they will only be allowed to go into the examination room in special circumstances (for safety reasons).

Children will not be allowed into the room while you are having the scan so you need to make arrangements for them before you come to your appointment.

Contacting us

It is very important to us that you have been given all the necessary information so that your scan is carried out successfully. Please contact us on the number given in your appointment letter if you have any questions, concerns or suggestions.

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464