

Information About Your CT Scan

Introduction

Your doctor has referred you for a CT scan.

This page contains information for patients, parents and carers about having a CT scan, how to prepare and what happens during your scan.

What is a CT scan?

A CT (computed Tomography) scan is a type of examination where X-rays are used in combination with computer technology to create a detailed 3D image of the body.

The scanner is a slim, doughnut-shaped machine, with a table which moves slowly through the hole in the middle, whilst you are being scanned.

How to prepare for your scan

Please read all the information sent to you regarding your appointment.

You will receive instructions on your appointment letter of what preparation is needed prior to your CT scan. Some scans require you not to eat for 4 hours before the examination.

Please continue to take all medications as normal.

Giving Your Consent

We want to involve you in all decisions about your care and treatment.

The radiographer will check your details with you; they will also confirm which part of your body you are expecting to have scanned and if you are happy for the scan to go ahead. This is called verbal consent and confirms that you have agreed to the procedure and understand what it involves.

The doctor that refers you for the scan will explain the risks and benefits of the test. If you are unsure about any aspect of the scan please do not hesitate to speak to the doctor or the Radiographer carrying out the scan.

What happens during the scan?

On arrival at the CT department you may be asked to change into a hospital gown.

You will be taken into the CT room where your details will be checked. The examination will be explained to you and you may ask any questions you have.

You will then be asked to lie on the scanner table, some scans you will lie head first and others feet first depending on the part of the body to be scanned.

The radiographer operating the scanner can see you at all times.

The scan takes about 10 minutes

For some scans you may also be required to hold your breath for short periods of time, you will hear these instructions of 'breathe in and hold your breath'.

After the CT scan?

You may eat and drink normally following your scan.

You will not receive any results on the day. The images will be reviewed by a Radiologist and a report sent to the doctor that referred you for the scan. An explanation of how to get your results will be given to you after the examination.

Special Information for persons of childbearing age (12 – 55 years)

If you have reason to believe that you may be pregnant, please contact the CT department on the number on your appointment letter before starting any preparation, and before attending your appointment. As the examination uses X-rays there is a risk to any unborn child, especially in early pregnancy.

Childcare

We are unable to offer childcare facilities and your children cannot go in the scan room with you. If you need to bring your children with you please bring along somebody who can look after them while you are being scanned.