



Computerised Tomography (CT) scan

About this booklet

Your doctor has referred you to have a CT scan. The purpose of this booklet is to explain what happens before, during and after the procedure. You will have been sent a letter with specific instructions about preparing for your scan.

What is a CT scan?

Computerised Tomography involves cross-sectional imaging using X-rays which are transmitted via a computer to a monitor. These images are stored for review by a Radiologist, a doctor who will interpret the scan.

The CT scanner is open at both ends and the area of your body being scanned will move through the scan area.

Before the scan

If your abdomen is being scanned, you may be asked to take a drink before your scan to outline your stomach and bowels.

Prior to the scan, the radiographer will check your details and ask you some questions to ensure that the correct area of your body is being scanned. If your chest or abdomen is being scanned, you will be asked to wear a hospital gown.

You will be asked to remove your jewellery or body piercings if they are going to be in the scan field. You may also have to remove your dentures.

You may get an injection of contrast medium (x-ray dye) which will help to outline different areas of the body and will help the doctor with your diagnosis. This injection is administered via a needle into a vein in your arm. The fluid is colourless and shows up white on the scans.

If you are having an injection we will ask you further questions about your medical history and we will explain what happens during the injection of contrast media.

Please bring a list of all medication you are taking with you.

During the scan

You will have to lie on a couch for the scan and keep still when the images are being taken. You may be asked to hold your breath whilst the images are captured.

The scan will take between 20 and 30 minutes, depending upon the area being scanned. Due to the nature of this exam, or to accomodate emergency scans, you may be in the Radiology Department for up to two hours.

After the scan

You may eat and drink normally after your scan. It is recommended that you drink plenty of fluids. If you have had an injection we recommend that you remain in the hospital for one hour after your scan.

Results of your scan will be sent back to the requester at the hospital.

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