

# CT scan

## Radiology Department Patient Information Leaflet

### Introduction

This leaflet is for people having a CT scan. It gives information on the scan, and the benefits and risks of the procedure.

### What is a CT scan?

A CT scan is a type of X-ray that uses a scanner to take a series of detailed images of your body. This includes looking at the structures of your body including internal organs, blood vessels and bones.

For the scan, you will need to lie down on the scanning table and this will pass through the centre of the scanner. The scanner is a doughnut-shaped structure with a hole in the centre (please see figure 1). You are not enclosed in the scanner. The scan is painless and very quick.



Figure 1 shows a CT scanner

## What are the benefits of a CT scan?

The CT scan provides detailed images of your body and can be used to detect many disorders of the body. The results of the CT scan will help your consultant to diagnose and monitor any health problems you have, and to decide on whether you need any further investigations or treatment.

## How do I prepare for the CT scan?

You can eat and drink normally before the scan.

You should continue to take your medicines as normal; however, please contact the Radiology Department on 01384 456111 ext. 5289 if you are taking **metformin** for diabetes.

## **What happens during the CT scan?**

We may ask you to change into a hospital gown, depending on your type of scan, and to remove any jewellery. This is to ensure there is nothing to affect the images from the scan.

Once in the scanning room, you may need to have an injection of contrast dye to highlight your blood vessels and organs. This involves inserting a small cannula (a thin, plastic tube) into your arm so that we can give you the dye halfway through the scan.

The cannula is inserted through your skin into a vein using a needle. Once the cannula is in place, the needle is removed leaving a small thin plastic tube in the blood vessel. This should be comfortable and will only be in place until your scan is finished.

The radiographers will then leave the room and go into a control room. They can see and hear you from the control room and you will only be alone for the duration of the scan. This is approximately five to 15 minutes.

Please be aware that we may need to do emergency scans throughout the day and although we try not to delay your appointment, sometimes this is unavoidable.

## **Will it hurt?**

No, the scan is not painful.

## **How long will it take?**

The scan takes approximately 15 minutes. Please be prepared to be in the department for up to half an hour.

## **Are there any risks?**

Rarely, some patients experience an allergic reaction to the contrast dye. This may include itching, a rash or difficulty breathing. We will monitor you throughout the examination.

If you have kidney problems, the contrast dye may have harmful effects on the kidneys. In this situation, the scan may still proceed, either using a reduced dose or without contrast dye.

On rare occasions, the vein that we put a small cannula into may collapse and contrast dye may leak into the surrounding tissues. This will cause swelling around the cannula site on your arm. If this occurs, we will raise your arm and put pressure on it to relieve the swelling, and give you advice after this.

### **X-ray precautions:**

- The procedure uses X-rays and these use a small amount of radiation which may add slightly to the normal risk of cancer.
- In radiology departments every effort is made to keep radiation doses low. The amount of radiation you are exposed to during a CT scan is the equivalent to between a few months and a few years of exposure to natural radiation from the environment.

For more information visit:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/medical-radiation-patient-doses/patient-dose-information-guidance>

- Your doctor thinks that the benefit of the examination outweighs the risks. However, if you are concerned about these possible risks, please discuss these with this doctor.

**Female patients – you must tell us if you are or might be pregnant before you attend for your scan.**

### **What happens after the scan?**

You will be able to continue with your normal daily activities after your scan. There are no restrictions on you driving or returning to work.

### **When will I know the results?**

A radiologist will interpret the X-rays and the results will be sent to your consultant, or the GP who referred you for the test, within two weeks. Your consultant will give you the results at your next outpatient clinic appointment, or they may write to you with the results.

If you were referred for the test by your GP, you will need to arrange an appointment to see them for the results.

## **What are the alternatives to a CT scan?**

A CT scan is a very detailed examination and your doctor feels that this is the best test for you. However, there may be other tests and examinations available to you and your consultant can explain other options to you.

## **Can I find out more?**

For more information about this examination you can look at the NHS Choices website:

<http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/ct-scan/pages/introduction.aspx>

If you have any questions, or if there is anything you do not understand about this leaflet, please contact:

The Radiology Department on 01384 456111 ext. 5289  
(9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)

Russells Hall Hospital switchboard number: 01384 456111

**This leaflet can be downloaded or printed from:**

<http://dgft.nhs.uk/services-and-wards/radiology/>

If you have any feedback on this patient information leaflet, please email [dgft.patient.information@nhs.net](mailto:dgft.patient.information@nhs.net)

**This leaflet can be made available in large print, audio version and in other languages, please call 0800 073 0510.**

للحصول على هذه النشرة بحجم أكبر، وعلى شكل إصدار صوتي و بلغات أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال بالرقم 08000730510.

此宣传单可提供大字版本、音频版本和其它语言版本，请拨打电话：0800 073 0510。

Ulotka dostępna jest również w dużym druku, wersji audio lub w innym języku. W tym celu zadzwoń pod numer 0800 073 0510.

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Aceasta broșura poate fi pusă la dispoziție tipărită cu caractere mari, versiune audio sau în alte limbi, pentru acest lucru va rugăm sunați la 0800 073 0510.

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