



## CT SCAN

### What to expect from your CT scan

#### What is CT?

CT (computed tomography) is an advanced imaging technology which takes x-ray images from different angles of the body. These images are combined by a computer to produce cross-sections of internal organs and 3D images.

We have specialist equipment for cardiac CT, including calcium scoring, CT fluoroscopy, angiographic CT, virtual colonoscopy and all routine orthopaedic, respiratory, oncology, vascular and neurological scans.

#### Is CT safe?

As CT involves x-rays, radiation exposure is a risk. Our CT scanner facilitates more accurate diagnosis with lower exposure to radiation than other CT scanners. It has been designed to the highest standards of radiation safety, and we will always use the lowest amount of radiation to take the images.

The minimal health risks of having a CT scan are greatly outweighed by the benefits, which include high accuracy and early detection of even the smallest abnormalities. Your doctor has chosen this scan for you having fully considered the relative risks and benefits.

You will be asked to fill in a safety questionnaire on arrival for your appointment to ensure you are safe to have the scan and minimise any risks.

If you are pregnant we will need to discuss the need for the diagnostic imaging tests as some scans can be harmful to unborn babies.

#### How do I prepare for my scan?

Depending on the type of scan you will be having, there are certain things you have to do to prepare which will be advised at the time of booking your scan.

For scans of the abdomen and pelvis you must not eat for four hours before your appointment, but you can drink as normal.

If you are breastfeeding, you may wish to express milk ahead of your scan, as you are advised to stop breastfeeding for a period of 24 hours after you have had the contrast injection.

#### What can I expect on the day of my scan?

You will need to arrive 15 minutes before your appointment time. During this time we will run through a CT safety questionnaire. It is very important to be accurate when answering the questions.

We may ask you to provide further information about any implants you may have. Once we have reviewed your safety questionnaire we will decide whether to go ahead with your scan.

You will be provided with a gown to change into that helps ensure clear images are obtained when scanning. All loose metal objects, including jewellery must be removed prior to the scan as these can cause problems with the images. The radiographer will check that you have removed anything containing metal prior to your scan and to ensure all safety protocols are met. You will have access to a locker for storing your belongings during the scan.

#### How long will it take?

The scan will usually take between 20 to 30 minutes, depending on the type of scan.

For more complicated scans, for example cardiac or colonoscopy scans, it can take up to 45 minutes.

#### What can I expect during my scan?

The radiographer will position the patient on the table of the CT scanner and ask them to relax and lie as still as possible. Once they are in the correct position, the table will slide into a large open doughnut-shaped ring (not a closed tunnel).

The radiographer will be able to see, hear and speak to you at all times through an intercom and viewing window and will give you simple instructions during the scan.

#### Will I need a contrast injection?

Some patients may need a 'contrast agent injection' which contains iodine to help make the images clearer.



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#### Will I need a contrast injection? - *Continued*

Contrast agent is a special liquid that highlights body tissue to make subtle differences, organs or disease easier to see.

During the injection you may experience a warm flush, a metallic taste in the back of your mouth and sometimes the feeling of passing urine. Allergic reactions to contrast are rare and you will be asked to record any known allergies on your CT safety questionnaire. If you feel discomfort at any time during the scan, or if you feel sick, please inform the radiographer.

#### What happens after my scan?

You may eat and drink as normal and return to your daily routine straightaway.

We advise you to drink plenty of fluids to help flush the contrast out of your urinary system.

Please check the skin where we injected you for signs of infection (for example, redness, soreness or weeping) over the next 24 hours. It is normal to experience some bruising in the area where we injected you once the needle has been removed.

If you see any signs of infection, or if you experience any of the rare side effects, including nausea, vomiting, shortness of breath, itchiness, or a rash on the body, please contact your doctor or visit a local A&E department immediately.

If you are breastfeeding and have had a contrast injection you are advised to stop breastfeeding and express and discard milk for 24 hours after the injection. Breastfeeding can recommence as normal after the 24 period.

#### How do I receive my results?

After your scan, if you are a private patient the radiographer will provide you with a CD of your images to take away. (We do not usually issue CDs for non-private patients, unless the doctor or consultant who referred you has asked us to).

#### How do I receive my results? – *Continued*

A radiologist will write a report and send it to the doctor or consultant who referred you, usually within 48 hours. Your report will contain a summary of the radiologist's findings and their recommendations for further follow-up.

You will need to arrange an appointment to discuss your report with the doctor or consultant who referred you for the scan.

#### Our chaperone service

All patients are entitled to have a chaperone present for any consultation, examination or procedure if they feel it is necessary. This chaperone may be a family member or friend. Sometimes it may be necessary for a formal chaperone (for example, a trained member of staff) to be present.

Please let us know before your appointment if you would like a chaperone.

#### Further questions

If you have any further questions or worries please do not hesitate to reach out to a member of our team. Your comfort and safety is of utmost importance to us.

For further information, including contact details and directions on how to find us, please visit our website: [www.harleystreet-medicalcentre.com](http://www.harleystreet-medicalcentre.com).

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We are committed to providing clean, safe premises for our clients in line with the Health and Social Care Act 2012, Code of Practice on the Prevention and Control of Infections and related guidance (December 2010) and all other Department of Health guidance.