

CT/MR Scanner Suite

Author: Anita Haylett, Head of CT/MR Scanning



James Paget
University Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust



CT Out-patient Information

This sheet has been given to you prior to your CT scan examination. It is important that you take the time to read it.

What is a CT scan?

A CT is a scan that uses x-rays to obtain detailed images of your body and head. The result is a series of images representing slices through your body.

Before the scan

If you are of limited mobility, and require a hoist to assist you from a wheelchair or trolley, then on receiving your appointment, please call us to let us know on 01493 453260 - Monday to Friday 9.00am - 4.30pm.

On the day of your scan, you may wish to prepare by removing piercings and jewellery that are in the area to be scanned, for example earrings will need to be removed if you are having a scan of your face or head.

On arrival at the Scanner Suite

Please check in at the reception. Some patients, when they arrive, will be given a drink of gastrografin or water. The purpose of this liquid is to ensure a good coating of your gut wall which helps to define the internal structures. This drink is consumed in the waiting area over 30- 60 minutes. For body scans we normally ask that you have a full bladder as well.

You will not be aware whether you require a drink beforehand but we ask that you **please arrive at the time specified on your appointment letter**, as any drinking time has been allowed for.

We may need to ask you to change into a hospital gown for the scan, and if you have not already done so, remove any piercings or jewellery that may obscure the pictures.

What will happen during the scan?

A radiographer or assistant will call you into the room and check your personal details. You will be asked to lie down on the scanner couch. For most examinations you will lie on your back.

The couch will then move slowly through the scanner. The scanner is a big hole - doughnut shaped - it is not a tunnel.

Whilst having the examination it is very important that you remain still or the images will be blurred. The scan will not cause any pain or bodily sensations.

How long will the examination take?

The scan will take between five minutes and 30 minutes, in most cases.

Are there any risks with this scan?

CT scanning uses x-rays to create the pictures. We are all exposed to background radiation each day of our lives. This comes from the ground, building materials, the air that we breathe and the food that we eat. Even flying in an aircraft increases our level of exposure. This is normal and natural.

Each medical x-ray gives us a small additional dose. The level of dose varies with the type of examination. Low doses do not cause any immediate harmful effects but there is a very small increase in the chance of cancer occurring many years or even decades later. The risks in children are around twice those of middle-aged people from the same examination and much less in the elderly. However, we all have a one in three chance of getting cancer even if we never have an x-ray, and the risk of missing a serious disorder by not having a CT scan is considerably greater.

What if I am pregnant?

It is very important that you let the radiographer know if you are or think you may be pregnant as the examination may be postponed to a later time.

Will I need to have an injection?

We often give an injection of x-ray dye (we call it "contrast") into a vein in your arm or hand. This liquid is colourless and will be passed out in your urine within a short space of time. We will ask you some questions about any allergies you may have, and whether you are asthmatic or diabetic before we give you the injection.

We use the contrast injection to highlight the images and provide better definition to aid the radiologist in their diagnosis.

During the injection you may feel a warm flush all over, get a metallic taste in your mouth or feel like you are wetting yourself. Don't worry, you won't be, it's just a sensation that lasts a few minutes. Many people will feel nothing.

Are there any risks associated with having this injection?

Yes, but they are rare.

Mild reactions such as feeling sick and skin hives (nettle rash) occur in approximately one in every 100 patients. Severe reactions are very rare occurring in one in 2,500 patients and very serious reactions may occur in one in 25,000 patients.

We ask that you wait for 20 minutes following the injection before you go home. If you experience a delayed skin rash or facial swelling over the following 3-4 days then please call in for advice on 01493 453260 (Monday-Friday 9-4.30) or contact your GP.

Occasionally, a small amount of this liquid will leak into the surrounding tissue in your arm causing bruising, temporary swelling and sometimes discomfort. In the unlikely event of this occurring we will provide you with further instructions to follow.

What about my medication?

You can continue with all medication prior to your scan.

If you are a diabetic who takes a metformin or glucophage tablet daily then you may be asked to stop this for 48 hours after the scan – this will only be necessary if you require the contrast injection during the scan. The radiographer will give you further information if this is required.

When will I get the results?

The results of the scan will not be available immediately. The consultant radiologist will report on the scan findings and the report will be sent to the doctor who requested the scan.

Hospital Doctors/ Outpatient Clinics

You may already have details about a follow up appointment. If you have no information about a follow-up after this scan, then please wait to hear from the hospital doctor. If you have any further concerns or the hospital has not made contact after a few weeks then please telephone the hospital and ask to speak to the doctor's secretary.

GPs

Results will only be sent to the surgery if the GP requested the scan. GPs do not, routinely, receive the results of scans that have been requested by hospital doctors. If this scan was a GP request then we suggest you allow three weeks before telephoning the surgery, unless you have been informed otherwise by the GP.

Feedback

We want your visit to be as comfortable as possible. Please talk to the person in charge if you have any concerns. If the ward/ department staff are unable to resolve your concern, please ask for our Patient Advice and Liaison (PALS) information. Please be assured that raising a concern will not impact on your care. **Before you leave the hospital you will be asked to complete a Friends and Family Test feedback card.** Providing your feedback is vital in helping to transform NHS services and to support patient choice.

Trust Values

Courtesy and respect

- A welcoming and positive attitude
- Polite, friendly and interested in people
- Value and respect people as individuals
So people feel **welcome**

Attentively kind and helpful

- Look out for dignity, privacy & humanity
- Attentive, responsive & take time to help
- Visible presence of staff to provide care
So people feel **cared for**

Responsive communication

- Listen to people & answer their questions
- Keep people clearly informed
- Involve people
So people feel **in control**
- Effective and professional
- Safe, knowledgeable and reassuring
- Effective care / services from joined up teams
- Organised and timely, looking to improve
So people feel **safe**



The hospital can arrange for an interpreter or person to sign to assist you in communicating effectively with staff during your stay. Please let us know.

For a large print version of this leaflet, contact PALS 01493 453240