

CT Scan

What is a CT scan?

A CT (Computed Tomography) scan allows us to look at your body in cross-section (like looking at the slices of a loaf of bread in turn).

Using the CT scanner and a powerful computer, we can build up a picture of the whole area showing both soft tissue and bone, and see parts of the body which are difficult to see by any other method.

Preparation

Some scans require no preparation whilst others will require you to fast for up to 6 hours before the procedure.

Please take your normal medication with a sip of water.

Prior to the abdomen or pelvis being examined, you will be given special drinks.

These drinks will help to outline the bowel, making interpretation easier and more accurate.

Before your examination, you will be asked to fill out a questionnaire and sign a consent form.

Procedure

You will be asked to lie on a table which is moved into the centre of the scanner.

This contains the x-ray tube and sensitive detectors. These rotate around the part of your body to be examined but will not touch you. The CT scanner makes a slight buzzing sound as it rotates. You may be asked to hold your breath for short times during the scan.

The information from the scan is processed by a computer to produce cross-sectional images.

The scan is closely monitored by our staff and, should you need help, they are trained to give you all the assistance you require.

Special provisions may be needed for small children.

Do I have an injection?

For some examinations you will be given an injection of contrast medium to make the picture clearer, or to give additional diagnostic information.

Please indicate on the questionnaire if you have any known allergies before the injection is given.

Are there any side effects?

You will be exposed to a small dose of x-rays, however it is unlikely to cause harmful effects.

If you have an injection of contrast you may notice a sensation of warmth and a metallic taste in the mouth. Very occasionally transient side effects such as nausea or an itchy rash may occur, but other reactions are extremely rare.

If there is a chance you may be pregnant you should inform us before the examination.

How long will the procedure take?

Most examinations are completed within 30 minutes, although attendance may take up to 1.5 hours for abdominal scans.

On completion of the procedure the pictures are processed and reported by the radiologist. CT examinations often involve a complex array of pictures and may take 60-90 minutes or longer to report.

The radiologist will then examine the films and send a report to your referring doctor.

Please bring any previous x-rays with you on the day of your examination.