

What to expect from a CT scan

The information listed below is only a guide; you will be advised of specific details when making your appointment.

A CT (Computed Tomography) scanner uses computer processing and X-rays to produce detailed cross-sectional images of your body, including three dimensional pictures. Unlike standard X-rays, a CT scan can show not only bones, but soft tissue anatomy, blood vessels and air – all in very fine detail.

These images are interpreted by a radiologist. A report will be generated from your scan and sent through to your doctor who will follow-up with the results.

Your doctor will be able to advise as to whether a CT scan may be useful in evaluating your condition.

The health risk from exposure to X-rays is generally outweighed by the vast health benefit achieved by getting a clear diagnosis.

Prior to your appointment

1. When you make an appointment for your scan you will be advised as to whether you require any specific preparation and we will go through the process with you then.
2. As a general guide you will be advised to not eat anything 2 hours prior to your appointment if you are required to have contrast. Contrast is a colourless fluid that is injected at the time of your scan to improve the definition of the images.
3. For abdominal examinations you may also be required to drink water before your scan.

On arrival

1. **All patients will be asked to present 10 minutes prior to their appointment time.**
2. The actual scan time is very short, usually only a matter of seconds. However, depending on your scan type, your appointment time may take 60 minutes to complete. You may be required to complete a questionnaire.
3. Your radiographer will guide you through the whole process. For some examinations you may be asked to change into a gown and to remove metallic objects such as jewellery and hearing aids.
4. The CT radiographer, who is trained in the use of X-ray equipment and CT scanning, will position you on the bed and take care of you throughout the scan. The radiographer will need to leave the scan room briefly whilst it is in progress but will remain in contact with you via an intercom and a viewing window.

5. It is important that you remain still for a few minutes while the scan is in progress. If you have difficulty lying flat or have poorly controlled pain, please discuss this with us prior to your scan.
6. If you need to have contrast for your scan this is given through a small needle that is placed in your vein. The injection of contrast may give you a brief sensation of warmth throughout the body and maybe a metallic taste in your mouth. These sensations are expected and normal and are of no cause for concern.

After procedure

1. After the examination, you can resume normal activities.
2. A report of your scan will be sent to your doctor as soon as possible.

If you have any questions regarding your CT appointment, **please do not hesitate to call us on 09 630 3324 or 0800 497 297.** We look forward to seeing you.