

Having a CT scan

Department of Radiology

Information for Patients

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Introduction

If you are an outpatient please read your appointment letter carefully to check which hospital your appointment is at. This leaflet tells you about your scan. Please read it carefully as it has important information and instructions.

What is a CT scan?

A CT (computed tomography) scan is an X-ray examination that gives much more information than a normal X-ray. It produces detailed images of your organs and blood vessels.

How do I get ready for my CT scan?

- Read your appointment letter. It will tell you if you need to follow any special instructions. It is very important that you follow the preparation instructions in your appointment letter.
- **If you are on medicine** from your doctor please continue to take it as usual, unless they tell you not to.
- **If you have diabetes and your appointment letter has eating and drinking instructions**, please talk to your normal diabetes care provider if you need advice. Please tell the CT staff on arrival if you have diabetes.
- If there is any chance that you may be pregnant, please contact the Radiology Department straight away. Your appointment may need to be rescheduled. If you do not call us for advice, your scan may be postponed after you arrive.
- Please bring with you any sprays, inhalers or angina tablets that you are taking.
- Please take off any jewellery and/or piercings from the area of your body being scanned.

**Health information and support is available at www.nhs.uk
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk

Important safety information

You may be given an injection of a colourless liquid (contrast liquid) into a vein in your arm. It shows up on X-rays and CT scans. Contrast liquid has iodine in it. It is removed from your body by your kidneys in your pee (urine) or at your routine dialysis if you have dialysis.

Please tell the CT staff when you arrive if:

- **You are allergic to iodine or rubber (latex)**, have any other allergies or have asthma.
- **You have had a reaction in the past to a contrast liquid injected into a vein (intravenous contrast)**. This is the dye used for CT scanning and X-rays of your heart or blood vessels.
- **You are on kidney dialysis or have any problems with your kidneys.**
- **You have diabetes.**
- **There is any chance that you may be pregnant.**

Who will be doing my scan?

A radiographer will do the scan. They may be assisted by a doctor who specialises in CT scans and a radiology assistant. As we are a teaching hospital a student may also be in the room. If you do not want this, you can ask that a student is not in the room when you have your scan.

What happens during the CT scan?

- If you are having a scan of your tummy (abdomen) we may ask you to drink up to 1 litre of fluid before your scan. This may take up to 1 hour. The fluid will help give more detailed images.
- We may ask you to change into a hospital gown. We may ask you to take off any jewellery. We will take you into the scan room. You may ask any questions that you have.
- We will ask you to lie still on the scan table. We may ask you to hold your breath several times during your scan. We will tell you over the intercom when to do this. If you have any difficulties lying flat or holding your breath for a short time (up to 20 seconds), please tell us when you arrive.
- We may need to give you an injection of a contrast liquid into a vein in your arm. This is to show your blood vessels on the scan images. If you need to have the injection, we will tell you. We will put a flexible needle (cannula) into a vein in your arm before your scan. Some patients get a warm feeling and a metallic taste when the injection is given and sometimes may feel sick. If you do get these feelings they usually last about 1 minute. Some patients will also have the feeling that they are about to pee (pass urine) but they are not actually doing so. This is also normal.
- You may be in the Radiology Department for up to 90 minutes in total. The CT scan takes between 10 and 30 minutes. The time will vary for each patient.

What happens after the scan?

If you were given an injection of contrast liquid, you will need to stay with us for a short time (15 to 30 minutes) after your scan before you can go home. You should then be free to return to work/normal daily life. You can eat and drink as usual after the scan.

Are there any risks?

Reaction to contrast liquid. Some patients may be allergic to the contrast liquid. You could get symptoms such as feeling or being sick (nausea or vomiting), or a rash. If you get any of these symptoms at the hospital, tell the doctor, nurse or other staff looking after you. If you start to get symptoms at home you should contact your GP or call 111.

Possible risks from exposure to radiation in this scan. The main risk from exposure to X-rays is a higher risk of getting a cancer in the future. This risk is thought to be very small.

We are all exposed to natural background radiation every day of our lives. This comes from the sun, the food we eat, and the ground. Each test that uses X-rays gives a dose on top of this natural background radiation. The radiation from the X-rays during a CT scan is equivalent to receiving up to 5 years of natural background radiation. The benefits of having this test are likely to outweigh any possible risks. The risks of not having the test could be greater. We try to keep your exposure to X-rays as low as possible.

The risks of radiation are slightly higher for an unborn child. We must ask all patients age 10 to 15 years registered female and all patients aged 16 to 55 years about their periods and/or possibility of being pregnant.

How do I get the results?

You will not get the results straight away. After your scan we will tell you who the results will go to and how to get your results.

Pictures from your CT scan will be looked at by a radiologist. The results will be sent to the GP or hospital doctor who wanted you to have this test

What if I need to talk to someone?

If you have any questions or concerns, or cannot make the appointment:

Please call the Radiology department on **0116 258 8765** and select **option 3**. Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm, but not on bank holidays.



اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔
على هذه المعلومات بلغة أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل

જો તમને અન્ય ભાષામાં આ માહિતી જોઈતી હોય, તો નીચે આપેલ નંબર પર કૃપા કરી ટેલિફોન કરો

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਗਏ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।

Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić pod podany niżej numer telefonu

Previous reference:

If you would like this information in another language or format such as EasyRead or Braille, please telephone 0116 250 2959 or email equality@uhl-tr.nhs.uk