



What to expect at your
CT scanning appointment.

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Your diagnostic scan.

Your doctor or healthcare professional has recommended a CT scan because it is the best way for us to make an accurate diagnosis of your condition.

You may feel nervous about your scan, but we don't want you to worry. Our experienced consultants and radiographers are friendly and approachable, and can answer any questions you may have.

We are here to help.



Some terms we use:

- **CT** – Computerised Tomography. A scan using special X-rays to take images of the body. It uses a computer to create 'slices' (cross-sections) of the body and internal organs.
- **Outpatient** – being an outpatient simply means you are coming in to see us for an appointment. You don't stay overnight.
- **Radiographer** – a professional trained to take X-rays and scans.
- **Radiologist** – a doctor specialising in interpreting X-rays.

About the scan.

During a CT scan, which is sometimes known as a CAT scan, a series of X-rays are taken of your inner body from slightly different angles and an advanced computer puts them all together, producing clear cross-sectional images.

The detail in the images of a CT scan means that the radiologist can detect even tiny abnormalities. This accuracy helps in the early detection of disease and injury, allowing effective treatment planning. Like an X-ray, there are no known side effects of a CT scan and it is normally a pain free procedure.

A CT scan may not be suitable for everyone. If you are, or might be pregnant, please contact us on the number on your appointment letter as we may not be able to scan you.

Preparing to visit us.

We want to make sure that you are fully informed – so please do call us if you have any questions before your appointment. If you have a question, we will answer it. If certain medical terms aren't clear, we explain them. If you'd like to bring a family member or friend, that's no problem.

At your appointment you will meet your radiographer who will be an expert in CT scanning. The radiographer will be with you throughout the whole process, from explaining the scan and answering your questions beforehand, to performing the actual scan.

Your appointment can take up to 40 minutes, depending on the area of your body being scanned. For around half this time you will be lying down on the scanning bed, but the actual scan will take less than a minute. If you suffer from claustrophobia, you may find this uncomfortable. If this is the case, don't worry – just contact us on the number on your appointment letter.

There may be other options for you, depending on the area of the body to be scanned.

No special preparation is needed, but we do want you to feel as comfortable as possible during your scan and for the procedure to go smoothly. So there are some things to bear in mind before you come to us.

You can eat and drink as normal and continue to take any prescribed medicines. And, because we need to get images that are clear as possible, please wear clothing that has no metallic parts, such as buttons, zips and hooks. If you are wearing an under-wired bra, you may be asked to remove it.

Some scanning beds have a weight limit for safe use, which is usually between 110 and 130Kg (about 20 stone). If you feel this may be a problem, please contact us and we can make arrangements that have your safety and comfort in mind.

On the day.

When you arrive for your appointment we'll check your name, date of birth and address. At this time you'll be given the opportunity to ask any questions.

Any metal objects, such as jewellery, keys, coins or metal dentures will be kept safely for you during the scan. If necessary, your radiographer may ask you to change into a gown for the scan. This will only be if an article of clothing could interfere with the scan.



May we have your permission?

At your appointment, we will ask you to sign a consent form to show that you agree to the procedure and fully understand what will happen. You are free to ask any questions you want, to ensure that you are comfortable with everything before you sign.

What happens during the scan?

We'd like to prepare you for your CT scan by explaining what which actually happen on the day.

The CT scanner is a large ring shaped machine, which is open at both ends. You will be asked to lie on a scanner bed which will gently move up and down and slide in and out. Because the area of your body to be scanned must be in the centre of the scanner, you may enter it either feet or head first, and parts of your body may remain outside the scanner.

You will not experience any pain, but some patients may feel uncomfortable having to lie still during the procedure to reduce movement on the scan. You will hear some mechanical sounds from the CT scanner, which are completely normal.

Inside the CT scanner is an X-ray tube which rotates to produce the images. While this happens and the scans are taken, the radiographer and other CT staff will need to leave the room.

But don't worry, your radiographer can see and hear you at all times and can communicate with you using an intercom. If you feel claustrophobic during the scan, you can tell your radiographer immediately.

You may be asked to hold your breath for short periods of time. While most people don't experience any difficulty with this, if this is a concern to you please inform the staff at the time of your scan.



After the procedure.

Once the examination is complete you will be able to leave and carry out your normal activities.

A radiologist will examine the images taken during your scan and the results will be available within 14 days. You should arrange an appointment with your doctor or the healthcare professional that referred you to us to discuss the results of the scan.

Are there any risks from CT?

We understand that it is important for you to know any risks involved in your scan, no matter how small.

A CT scan uses special X-rays. And, like all X-rays, their use is subject to strict regulation and only performed when clinically necessary to help diagnose a problem.

The radiation dose involved in a CT scan is kept to a minimum. We are all exposed to small amounts of radiation every day as it is naturally present in the atmosphere. This is called 'background radiation'.

It is important to remind female patients who are, or think they might be pregnant, to contact us on the number on your appointment letter because the appointment may have to be rearranged.

If at any time, you're unsure of any of the information we give you, don't hesitate to ask for a clearer explanation in simpler terms. We want you to feel reassured and to understand what's involved.



Questions? Call us.

Before you come in, if you have any questions, please feel free to call us on the number on your appointment letter