

## Having a CT (Computerised Tomography) Examination

### Introduction

This leaflet tells you about having a CT scan. It explains what is involved and what the possible risks are.

A Radiographer will perform your scan and it will then be interpreted by a specially trained doctor called a Radiologist.

### What is a CT scan?

CT stands for computerised tomography. A CT scanner uses X-rays and a computer to produce detailed images of many structures inside of the body, including the internal organs, blood vessels and bones. This information may help your Consultant or Doctor with the diagnosis and planning of your treatment.

### Who will be present for the scan?

Radiographers and Radiographic Assistants will be present in the room to prepare you for the scan, they will introduce themselves at the start of the procedure.

Occasionally Student Radiographers may be present to observe the scan.

### Is there any preparation needed before my scan?

For abdominal scans it may be necessary to drink water or an oral contrast before you arrive in the department, full instructions will be given in your appointment letter. **You do not need a full bladder.**

### What happens during the scan?

- You may be asked to change into a gown by a member of staff depending on which part of the body is to be examined.
- You will then be taken into the CT room and positioned into the scanner. The area to be scanned will be positioned within the machine.
- We will make you comfortable and answer any queries you may have. The scan will then be taken.
- The scan may need an injection into a vein in your arm of a contrast dye or substance that improves the picture of certain tissues or blood vessels.

The contrast dye used in CT scans contains iodine. If you are allergic to iodine please let us know.

- The radiographer will leave the room during the scan, but will be able to talk to you through an intercom.

### Will it hurt?

A CT scan is a painless procedure.

### How long will it take?

The length of the examination will vary depending on which area is being looked at. The actual scan is normally completed in a few minutes. You can expect to be in the Medical Imaging Department for up to one hour. Many examinations are however completed sooner than this.

## What happens after the scan?

You should feel well enough to go home or back to work after the examination. A Radiologist will report on the scan images.

**If your scan involves an injection of a contrast agent you may be advised to wait in the hospital and it is recommended that you do not drive or use tools or machines for 1 hour after the injection.**

## Are there any risks or complications?

A CT scan involves a dose of radiation. Usually individuals who are pregnant should not have a CT scan, as there is a small risk that x-rays may cause an abnormality to the unborn child. Be sure to tell your doctor or the radiographer if you think there is a chance you may be pregnant. If you have been booked for an abdominal or pelvic CT and this appointment does not fall within 10 days of the start of your last period please contact the department prior to attending.

## Are there any side effects caused by the injection?

It is possible to have an allergic reaction. If these occur within your time in the Medical Imaging department, the staff will care for you and explain the treatment required. Side effects may occur up to several days after the injection (although this is very rare).

Symptoms of an allergic reaction to be aware of:

- Hives or a rash.
- Anaphylaxis, including breathing difficulties.
- Difficulty breathing.
- Pain in the chest.
- Lumps, itchy spots, or blisters on the skin or in the mouth.
- Swelling of your face, lips, tongue or throat.

**Get emergency medical help if you have any of the above symptoms as they could be signs of a severe allergic reaction.**

## Finally

If you find reading this leaflet difficult or you do not understand what it means for you, please call 01392 402336, selecting option 1, then option 4 and we can talk it through or alternatively, you can email us at: [rduh.radiologyappointments@nhs.net](mailto:rduh.radiologyappointments@nhs.net).

For more information about the department please refer to the enclosed "Welcome to the Medical Imaging Department" leaflet.

## How to get to the Royal Devon & Exeter Hospital at Wonford

Please refer to the enclosed "Welcome to the Medical Imaging Department" leaflet or use the Trusts website for the latest information:

**[www.royaldevon.nhs.uk/our-sites](http://www.royaldevon.nhs.uk/our-sites)**

*Modified with acknowledgment of, and permission from, the Royal College of Radiologists.*

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