



Information for  
patients and  
carers

CT scan

This leaflet explains the process of having a CT scan, including the benefits and risks. It also provides information on what to expect when you come to hospital.

If you have any further questions please speak to the doctor, radiographer or nurse.

## **What is a CT scan?**

CT stands for Computed Tomography.

A Computerised tomography (CT) scan uses x-rays and a computer to create detailed images of the inside of your body.

## **Why should I have a CT scan?**

A CT scan can help your doctor to find the cause of your problem and the best treatment options for you.

## **Are there any alternatives?**

Your doctor feels that a CT scan is the best option for you; a standard x-ray will not provide the same level of detail.

## **Please inform us before you attend**

- If you are or think you may be pregnant
- If you weigh over 30 stone/190 kilograms
- If you have problems standing or need a hoist to transfer
- If you require an interpreter – please inform us as soon as you receive your appointment letter and we will arrange an official interpreter for you

## Can you bring a relative or friend with you?

A relative or friend can accompany you to the hospital but they will usually not be allowed into the room when you have your examination. Please note that as we have limited seating and do not have child care facilities, you are advised not to bring small children with you to your appointment.

## How long does it take?

You should plan to be in the CT department for up to 1 hour, which will include any preparation time needed for your scan. The scan itself takes between 10 and 20 minutes.

We will try to keep to your appointment time but occasionally we have to scan patients urgently at short notice. This means your scan could be delayed, but we will let you know if this is the case.

## Preparation for the scan

If you are taking any medicines, please continue to take these as usual unless you have been told otherwise by your doctor.

## What happens when I arrive for the CT scan?

When you arrive in the CT department, please book in at the reception desk and take a seat in the waiting area.

You may be asked to drink water prior to your scan.

Metal fastenings like zips, poppers and hooks and eyes will show up on the scan so we may ask you to change into a hospital gown in the changing rooms before going into the examination room.

## What happens during the CT scan?

Your CT scan will be undertaken by a radiographer who is specially trained to carry out scans.



The scanning machine is like a large ring doughnut similar to this photograph.

During the scan you will need to lie very still and you may be asked to hold your breath for a moment. The table moves slowly and slides forwards and backwards through the centre of the CT

scanner. Unlike some other scanning machines, the CT scanner is **not** enclosed.

When you are positioned, the radiographers will leave the room, but you will be able to talk to them through an intercom and they will be able to see you through a glass window.

Once the scans have been taken the radiographer will check them briefly to ensure that they are of sufficient quality to be able to make a diagnosis. When this is done you will be able to get off the scanner bed and leave the scanning room. Whilst the radiographer can reassure you that the appropriate images have been obtained, they will not be able to give you the results.

## Will you feel any pain?

You cannot feel x-rays and the procedure itself is painless. It is important for you to keep still. If you find it uncomfortable to lie still then please tell the radiographer.

## After the scan

In most cases, as soon as the scan is finished you can go home, or back to the ward if you are staying in hospital.

## Are there any risks?

As with x-rays, CT scans use radiation. The level of radiation used is very small and the benefits of the scan are thought to outweigh the risk. There are some small risks involved with the radiation received during a CT scan, but only the minimum amount of radiation is used to produce the images required. We use the smallest dose possible, in line with national regulations. This allows us to make an accurate diagnosis to help plan your care. Your clinician has determined that the benefits of having the CT examination far outweigh the radiation dose you will receive.

## When will I receive the examination results?

Following your CT examination, the radiologist will review the scans and write a formal report of the results. This will be sent to the clinician who referred you for this examination. During your examination the radiographer will advise you on how you will receive these results. Unfortunately, you will not receive any results at the time of your examination.

## Contact details

Should you require further advice or information please contact CT appointments on **01772 522553**.

Lines are open 8.30am to 4.30pm Monday to Friday (excluding Bank Holidays).

## Sources of further information

[www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk](http://www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk)

[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

[www.patient.co.uk](http://www.patient.co.uk)

[www.accessable.co.uk](http://www.accessable.co.uk)

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/ionising-radiation-from-medical-imaging-examinations-safety-advice/exposure-to-ionising-radiation-from-medical-imaging-safety-advice](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ionising-radiation-from-medical-imaging-examinations-safety-advice/exposure-to-ionising-radiation-from-medical-imaging-safety-advice)

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/CT-Scan/](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/CT-Scan/)

All our patient information leaflets are available on our website for patients to access and download

[www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets](http://www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets)

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Lancashire Teaching Hospitals is a smoke-free site.

On 31 May 2017 Lancashire Teaching Hospitals became a smoke-free organisation. From that date smoking is not permitted anywhere on any of our premises, either inside or outside the buildings. Our staff will ask you about your smoking status when you come to hospital and will offer you support and advice about stopping smoking including Nicotine Replacement Therapy to help manage your symptoms of withdrawal.

If you want to stop smoking you can also contact the Quit Squad Freephone 0800 328 6297.

Please ask if you would like help in understanding this information. This information can be made available in large print and in other languages.

**Cantonese:**

如果你希望以另外一種格式接收該資訊，請和我們聯絡，不必猶豫。

**Gujarati:**

જો તમને આ માહિતી બીજી રચના કે ફોર્મેટમાં મેળવવાની ઇચ્છા હોય, તો કૃપા કરી અમારો સંપર્ક કરતા અચકાશો નહિ.

**Hungarian:**

Kérjük, vegye fel velünk a kapcsolatot, ha más formában kéri ezt az információt.

**Polish:**

Jeżeli chciał(a)by Pan/Pani otrzymać niniejsze informacje w innym formacie, prosimy o kontakt.

**Punjabi:**

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਫਾਰਮੈਟ ਵਿਚ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਲੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਤਾਂ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਨਾ ਝਿਜਕੋ।

**Urdu:**

اگر آپ اس معلومات کو کسی اور صورت میں حاصل کرنا چاہتے ہیں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے رابطہ کرنے میں ہچکچاہٹ محسوس نہ کریں۔

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**Division:** Diagnostics and Clinical Support

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