

Having a CT scan as part of the SCAN (Suspected CANcer) Pathway

Your general practitioner (GP) has referred you for this CT scan of your chest, abdomen and pelvis as part of your referral onto the SCAN pathway to investigate your non-specific, yet concerning, symptoms. This leaflet outlines what to expect at the appointment. If you have any other queries please contact the Radiology Department on 0118 322 8368.

On the day of the scan

You can eat and drink as normal before your CT scan. Continue to take any medication that you have been prescribed.

You will be met at Radiology reception on level 2 Centre Block, by the SCAN navigator, who will be your link person through these appointments.

What is a CT scan and why do I need one?

CT stands for Computerised Tomography. The CT scan uses X-rays and a computer to generate detailed, 'sliced' pictures of the inside of your body. This allows the consultant radiologist (doctor specialising in diagnostic imaging – X-rays and scans) to look in detail at the internal anatomy of your body in order to write the formal report.

Are there any risks with this test?

Prior to the scan a CT safety checklist will be completed to discuss any safety concerns / issues or allergy to iodine (the intravenous contrast – dye). **If you know you are allergic to the iodine contrast, please contact the SCAN Navigator on 0118 322 7928 to let us know.**

As this is only a straightforward, diagnostic procedure, there are no expected risks associated with the scan. The scanner uses ionising radiation (X-rays) to produce the pictures. The guidelines followed for carrying out scans are reviewed regularly to ensure the procedure is as safe as possible and the radiographers are trained to ensure the radiation dose you receive is as low as practically possible.

Female patients of a child-bearing age

To best ensure you are not pregnant we like to scan you within 10 days of the first day of your last period. However, if you are confident that you are not pregnant your appointment can fall outside of this 10-day period as long as it falls within your 28-day cycle and you are not overdue your period. If you have any questions / concerns or you would like to rearrange your appointment please contact the SCAN Navigator on the number provided.

What happens during the CT?

The CT scanner consists of an X-ray tube that rotates around your body. You will usually be moved continuously through the scanner as it takes the pictures. The X-rays pass through your body and hit a series of detectors opposite the tube, which then generate the pictures via a complex computer.

The scan itself is painless and will usually take a few seconds, although the whole procedure will last approximately 10-20 minutes.

The only sensation felt during the scan is from the injection we give you (if appropriate). This intravenous iodine contrast injection is designed to show up your internal organs and vessels on the image.

For this we will insert a cannula (flexible plastic tube) into a vein in your lower arm / hand. This is done using a small needle. The cannula insertion may be done outside of the scanner room in preparation for your scan. As the contrast is injected, it is normal to feel a warm flush over your body. It can also give the sensation of needing the toilet.

After the CT scan

Once the scan has finished, you can get dressed and go home. There is no recovery period needed or lasting effects from a diagnostic scan. If you have the iodine injection, you are encouraged to drink plenty of fluids after the scan to help your kidneys filter and flush out the iodine contrast.

Results

The results from your CT scan will usually be reviewed by the SCAN pathway consultant, who will review it alongside your clinical history and the results from the blood tests and other relevant investigations arranged by your GP.

Next steps

Depending on the results, there are a number of next step options.

- The SCAN consultant may decide further tests are required in order to make a diagnosis;
- You will get an appointment to attend a specialist clinic with a consultant or one of the SCAN team, or;
- You will be referred back to your GP.

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Your safety and that of NHS staff is very important.

To minimise your risks while ensuring you have the necessary investigations, clinic appointments may be via telephone, a face-to-face 'video' consultation or a hospital attendance.

If you have any Coronavirus symptoms (high temperature, new continuous cough, loss or change to sense of smell or taste), or you need to self-isolate because a family member is unwell, please contact the SCAN navigator either by phone 0118 322 7928 or email rbb-tr.scannavigator@nhs.net. **Do not go to the hospital or to your appointment without speaking to them first.**

Further information

www.nhs.uk/conditions/ct-scan/pages/introduction.aspx

Contacting us

Radiology Department, Tel 0118 322 7991.

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

RAD_105

RBFT Radiology Department, September 2022

Next review due: September 2024