

Having an abdomen / pelvis CT scan

This leaflet explains what happens during a CT scan of the abdomen or pelvis in the Radiology (X-ray) Department at the Royal Berkshire Hospital. The scan is conducted by a diagnostic radiographer (X-ray professional).

On the day of the scan

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

Either an RDA (radiographic assistant) or radiographer (X-ray practitioner) will greet you in the waiting area and provide you with any information that is relevant to your examination. The examination is conducted by the diagnostic radiographer.

Please attend alone unless you have a social or clinical need.

Prior to the scan

We may ask you to change into a gown. If you prefer your own clothes, a tracksuit without a zip or similar clothing may be worn, or you may bring pyjamas and dressing gown. A changing cubicle is provided.

We will routinely give an IV (intravenous injection) as part of the examination. For this we will insert a cannula (flexible plastic tube) into a vein in your lower arm / hand. This does mean using a small needle to do this. The cannula insertion may be done outside of the scanner room in preparation for your scan.

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

You are having a scan because a specialist hospital doctor (or, on occasions, your GP) has requested this examination based on any symptoms you are experiencing or results of imaging / tests you may have had previously.

CT stands for computerised tomography. It uses X-rays and a computer to create detailed images of the inside of your body.

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), but if you know you are allergic when you receive your appointment, please contact the Radiology Department on 0118 322 7991 to notify us.

This is a straightforward examination. As this is only a diagnostic procedure there are no expected risks associated with the scan. The scanner uses ionising radiation (X-rays) to produce the picture. The scanner protocols are reviewed and optimised and the radiographers are trained to ensure the dose you receive is a low as practically possible.

What happens during the CT?

You will be asked to lie flat on your back (occasionally on your front) for the examination. 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 from the scan is from the injection we give you (if appropriate). This intravenous iodine injection is designed to show up your internal organs and blood vessels. As this is injected it is normal to feel a warm flush over your body which can make you feel like you need the toilet because it fills the bladder quickly.

After the CT scan

Once the scan has finished, you will be free to get dressed and go home. There is no associated recovery period or lasting effects from this type of 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 injection.

Results

If you are having the CT scan for diagnosis reasons then a report of your examination will usually be sent to the doctor who referred you. If this is a hospital specialist, then the specialist will contact your GP with the report.

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.

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