

How long does the scan take?

The actual scanning process only takes about 10 minutes. The total time you will be in the department for will be around an hour to an hour and a half.

Side effects

You will be able to drive home afterwards and return to work. However, if you have had an injection of contrast it is important that you increase the amount of fluids you drink when you leave the department and for the rest of the day. You will be asked to stay in the department for a short time after the scan, usually between 15 and 30 minutes. During this time we will give you a hot drink and a biscuit. We recommend that you bring food if you want to have some after the scan, as we can only provide light snacks.

The results

Our specialist consultant will examine the CT images after your visit and will send a written report to your doctor which will normally be available within five to seven days. You will need to make an appointment with your doctor to discuss the results.

Were you happy with our service?

We may ask you to spare a few minutes to fill in a simple questionnaire which will help us to achieve the high standards that you deserve.

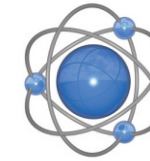


Don't worry about your scan. We are here to help. If you have any fears or doubts, don't hesitate to ask a member of our staff. If you would like to visit the department before your scan, please contact us.

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Cheltenham Imaging Centre CT Department Information for patients



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The CT Department

The CT (Computed Tomography) Department is made up of radiologists and radiographers. The radiologists are doctors who are specially trained to interpret CT images and carry out complex examinations. They are supported by radiologists who are trained to carry out x-rays, CT scans and other imaging procedures.

What does a CT scan involve?

The scan is carried out by a special type of x-ray machine. The images the machine produces are cross-sections of your body (think slices in a loaf of bread). The parts of your body can be shown in much greater detail than in standard x-ray films, and this helps the doctors diagnose your condition much more accurately.

Our open scanner is shaped like a doughnut. You will lie on a moveable bed and pass through the 'doughnut.' A narrow, fan-shaped beam of x-rays is produced from inside the machine, which rotates 360 degrees around you. The x-rays pass through your body and are detected by electronic sensors on the other side of the machine. The information from the machine then passes to a computer which produces a picture of the structure of the inside of your body. The bed moves a small distance to position you for the next picture. It takes about a second to produce each slice. These pictures can then be reconstructed by the computer to form a complete image of the inside of your body.



Risks

CT scanning does involve being exposed to radiation in the form of x-rays, but the benefit of an accurate diagnosis far outweighs the risk from the x-rays. However, if you are pregnant, or may possibly be pregnant, you must tell a member of staff before the scan as unborn children are at greater risk because they are still developing. The amount of radiation used for a CT scan is more than the amount used for a standard x-ray and (depending on the examination you have) is equal to the amount of natural radiation you would receive from the atmosphere over a period of around three years. The CT scan itself is completely painless.

Contrast injections and oral contrasts

Before the scan, you may have to take a contrast by mouth, have an injection of a contrast, or you may have to have both of these. A contrast is a dye used to make blood vessels and organs stand out in images. If you are breastfeeding you should wait 24 hours after a contrast injection before you breastfeed again.

Can I bring a relative or friend?

If you would like a friend or relative to come with you, they may wait in the waiting room. However, we have very limited space so we do ask that you bring just one person.

Please do not bring small children to the department.

At your appointment

When you arrive, please report to reception. Once you have been signed in the radiographer will come and explain the procedure you are going to have. You should tell them if you have diabetes, asthma, or any allergies. If you need an oral (by mouth) contrast the radiographer will give you this before you go to the CT department.

If you need to remove any clothing someone will show you to the changing rooms and give you a patient gown or other special clothing to change into.

During the scan you will be made comfortable on the moveable bed. Straps and pillows may be used to help you stay in the correct position and to help you stay still during the scan. If you need an injection of contrast, you will be given this through a vein in your arm while you are lying on the scanner bed. The radiographer will control the bed from the control room and will slowly move it to position the part of your body being investigated inside the 'doughnut.'

The radiographers will be in the control room during the scan, but you will be able to talk to them using an intercom, and they will be watching you all the time. You will hear a clicking and whirring sound from the CT scanner during the procedure.

During the scan the radiographer may ask you to hold your breath or to not swallow while each image is being produced - if you feel any discomfort or anxiety because of this, please tell the radiographer immediately.

