

CT scan – chest and upper abdomen

Respiratory Unit

Patient Information Leaflet

Introduction

This leaflet gives general information for people having a CT scan (CT stands for computerised tomography). It does not replace the need for personal advice from a healthcare professional. Please ask us if you have any questions at the time of your scan.

What is a CT scan of the chest and upper abdomen?

It is a special X-ray that allows us to create a series of detailed images of the inside of your chest and tummy area. There is no other test that gives as much information on lung tissue.

The scanner consists of a doughnut-shaped structure, about two feet thick with a hole in the centre (see figure 1). You lie on a bed and this passes through the centre of the scanner while the machine's X-ray beam rotates around you. You are not enclosed in the scanner.



Figure 1 shows a CT scanner

Why do I need to have the CT scan?

You may have had a chest X-ray recently which has shown some shadowing, or your doctor may be investigating issues with your chest.

What are the benefits of the scan?

The CT scan is used to see the soft tissues inside your body and is used to detect many disorders of the heart, lungs or chest area. The results of the CT scan will help your doctor to diagnose any health problems you have. It will also help them decide on whether you need any further investigations or treatment.

What are the risks?

We aim to make sure that every patient is fully informed about the risks and benefits of a procedure or treatment. CT scanning involves the use of X-rays. The amount of radiation used is more than an ordinary X-ray of the chest or body, and is equal to the natural radiation that we receive from the environment over a period of approximately three years.

Women who are or might be pregnant must inform a member of staff before the scan as X-rays during pregnancy carry a very small risk of exposing the unborn baby to radiation. This could cause cancer to develop in childhood.

The CT scan involves you having a contrast medium injected into a vein to increase the quality of information obtained from the scan. The injection usually causes nothing more than a warm feeling passing around your body. Rarely, if you have an allergy to the contrast medium, you may experience itching, difficulty breathing or you may get a rash.

If you have kidney problems, the contrast medium may have harmful effects on the kidneys. In this situation, the scan can still proceed either without contrast medication or using a reduced dose.

Despite these slight risks, your doctor believes it is advisable that you should have this examination, and there are risks from missing a serious disorder by not having your scan. If you have any concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us.

What are the alternatives?

There are no alternatives to this scan that will give us the same quality of information. However, it is your choice as to whether you have the scan.

How do I prepare for the CT scan?

You do not need to change your diet or medication before the scan. You should continue to take your medicines as normal. However, please contact the CT scanning department on 01384 244043 if you are taking **metformin** for diabetes.

What happens during the CT scan?

You will need to wear a hospital gown during the scan. As X-rays have difficulty passing through metal, we will ask you to remove any jewellery.

Our radiographer will ask you to lie on a bed that will move through the scanner. They will then leave the room while the scan takes place. However, you will be able to see them through a glass window and talk to them through a microphone.

Most people are given an injection of contrast medium (a type of dye) into a vein in your arm during the scan to make the blood vessels easier to see. Please see the section 'What are the risks?' for more information about this.

The scan is not at all painful. You may be asked to hold your breath for a few seconds while the images are taken. Each image is taken quickly, but it takes a few minutes to appear on the radiographer's screen. You should expect to be in the scanning room for about 10 minutes.

What happens after the scan?

You will be able to continue with your normal daily activities after your scan. There are no restrictions on you driving or returning to work.

Can I find out more?

You can find out more about CT scans on the following weblink:

NHS Choices

<http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/CT-scan/Pages/Introduction.aspx>

If you have any questions, or if there is anything you do not understand about your scan or this leaflet, please contact:

CT scanning department on 01384 244043 (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)

Russells Hall Hospital switchboard number: 01384 456111

This leaflet can be downloaded or printed from:

<http://dudleygroup.nhs.uk/services-and-wards/respiratory-medicine/>

If you have any feedback on this patient information leaflet, please email patient.information@dgh.nhs.uk

This leaflet can be made available in large print, audio version and in other languages, please call 0800 073 0510.

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此宣传单可提供大字版本、音频版本和其它语言版本，请拨打电话：0800 073 0510。

Ulotka dostępna jest również w dużym druku, wersji audio lub w innym języku. W tym celu zadzwoń pod numer 0800 073 0510.

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Aceasta broșura poate fi pusă la dispoziție tipărită cu caractere mari, versiune audio sau în alte limbi, pentru acest lucru vă rugăm sunați la 0800 073 0510.

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