



Patients having a CT examination

Information for patients from the Radiology Department

You have been referred to Radiology for a CT scan. This leaflet will explain the following.

- What a CT scan is.
- What happens before and during your procedure.
- When you will get your results.
- Who to contact if you have any questions about your appointment.

We hope this leaflet answers some of the questions you may have. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to a member of your healthcare team.

What is a CT scan?

A CT (computed tomography) scan is an x-ray test. It lets us look at the body more accurately than is possible using normal x-rays. It does this by producing a cross-section or slice of the body.

CT is used to scan most parts of the body, including the brain, chest, abdomen, pelvis, and sometimes the bones and joints.

The scanner itself looks like a huge 'ring doughnut' with a table moving through it. During the scan, the table moves backwards and forwards to allow the scanner to take pictures of the body.



A CT scanner in the hospital

What happens when I arrive at the hospital?

- **Buckland Hospital, Dover**

When you arrive at the hospital, please go to the main reception desk. You will be shown where to wait and staff in the CT Department will be told you have arrived. If after 10 minutes a member of staff has

not been to see you, please tell the receptionist.

- **Kent and Canterbury Hospital (K&C), Canterbury**

When you arrive at the hospital, please go to the x-ray reception desk; this is in the main X-ray Department. You will be given a card to take with you, and directed to the CT waiting room.

- **Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother (QEQM) Hospital, Margate**

When you arrive at the hospital, please go to the reception desk in the Medical Imaging Department. The department is off the main corridor at the Ramsgate Road entrance to the hospital. You will be shown where to wait, and staff in the CT Department will be told you have arrived. If after 10 minutes a member of staff has not been to see you, please tell the receptionist.

- **William Harvey Hospital (WHH), Ashford**

When you arrive at the hospital, please go to the reception desk in the CT / MRI Unit. The unit is in the CT and MRI building, behind the Emergency Department. You will be shown where to wait, and staff in the CT Department will be told you have arrived. If after 10 minutes a member of staff has not been to see you, please tell the receptionist.

What happens before my scan?

- **Please check your appointment letter, for details of when to arrive for your scan.** For scans of the abdomen and pelvis you may need to arrive **before** your appointment time, so we can prepare you for your scan.
- Do not eat for 2 hours before your scan, but you may drink clear fluids up to your appointment time.
- Continue taking any medication as normal, unless you are told specifically to stop.
- For scans of the abdomen and pelvis, you may be asked to drink a jug of liquid before your scan. The liquid may be water or contrast, to help outline your stomach and bowel. It may be needed to fill your bladder, to improve the quality of the pictures.
- **For female patients of child-bearing age.** If you think there is a possibility you may be pregnant, please contact the CT Department before your scan.
- **Diabetic patients.** If you are a tablet controlled diabetic, please contact the Radiology Department urgently. The department's contact telephone number can be found at the end of this leaflet.
- Please note that due to the nature of the examination we cannot have unaccompanied children in the department.
- If possible, please wear metal-free clothing.

What happens during my scan?

- When it is time for your scan, a member of staff will take you to the examination room.
- You may need to remove some clothing and jewellery, as metal can interfere with the scan.

- During your scan, we may need to give you an injection of a contrast medium into a vein in your arm or hand through a cannula. Contrast medium makes it easier to see your organs and blood vessels, and improves the quality of the pictures. If the injection is needed, the radiographer will ask you some questions about your general health.

During the injection, you may notice a warm feeling and a metallic taste in your mouth. This is normal and will pass quickly.

- It is important that you lie still during your scan. The radiographer may ask you to hold your breath, to make the pictures come out more clearly.
- During your scan, the radiographer will be able to see you at all times from the control room. You can talk to each other through an intercom. If you are worried or have any questions, please speak to the radiographer.

How long will my scan take?

The scan itself will take between 10 and 15 minutes, depending on how difficult the examination is. Generally you can expect to be in the department for about 1 to 2 hours.

What will happen after my scan?

- Once your scan is complete, you can get dressed.
- You can go to the toilet, and eat and drink normally.
- If you had a contrast injection, the cannula in your arm will be removed. Please stay in the hospital for 1 hour after your injection. This is to make sure you are feeling well before you go home.

Are there any risks involved in having a CT scan?

CT scanning does involve x-rays, and so has the usual risks associated with radiation. Far more x-rays are involved in a CT scan than in an ordinary x-ray, so doctors do not ask for this examination without a good medical reason.

In very rare cases, patients may have side effects from the contrast medium injection. Staff working in the CT Department are trained to deal with this if it happens.

Despite these slight risks, your doctor believes you should have this examination. Remember that there may be greater risks from missing a serious illness by not having the scan.

When will I get my results?

The radiographer can tell you that they have the appropriate images, but they will not be able to give you any idea of the results at the time of your scan. A radiologist or advanced practitioner radiographer will analyse and interpret your scan. They will prepare a report and send it to your doctor. Your doctor will tell you the results and discuss them with you.

Further information

If you need to contact us about your appointment, please telephone the Radiology Department on 01843 234565.

What do you think of this leaflet?

We welcome feedback, whether positive or negative, as it helps us to improve our care and services.

If you would like to give us feedback about this leaflet, please fill in our short online survey. Either scan the QR code below, or use the web link. We do not record your personal information, unless you provide contact details and would like to talk to us some more.

Giving feedback about this leaflet



<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/MDOBU4/>

If you would rather talk to someone instead of filling in a survey, please call the Patient Voice Team.

- **Patient Voice Team**

Telephone: 01227 868605

Email (ekhuft.patientvoice@nhs.net)

This leaflet has been produced with and for patients.

Please let us know:

- If you have any accessibility needs; this includes needing a hearing loop or wanting someone to come with you to your appointment.
- If you need an interpreter.
- If you need this information in another format (such as Braille, audio, large print or Easy Read).

You can let us know this by:

- Visiting the Trust web site (<https://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/ais>).
- Calling the number at the top of your appointment letter.
- Adding this information to the Patient Portal (<https://pp.ekhuft.nhs.uk/login>).
- Telling a member of staff at your next appointment.

Any complaints, comments, concerns or compliments, please speak to a member of your healthcare team. Or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service on 01227 783145 or email (ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net).

Patients should not bring large sums of money or valuables into hospital. Please note that East Kent Hospitals accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property, unless the property has been handed into Trust staff for safe-keeping.

Further patient information leaflets are available via the East Kent Hospitals' web site (<https://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/patient-information>).

Reference number: EKH815

First published:
July 2008

Last reviewed:
August 2025

Next review date:
December 2028



Illustrations and Photographs created by the Medical Photography Department.

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