



1. What is CT?

Computed Tomography (CT) or 'CAT' scans are special x-ray scans that produce cross-sectional pictures of the body using x-rays and a computer.

CT is used when your doctor needs more information than what an ordinary x-ray can provide.

The CT machine looks like a large doughnut with a narrow table in the middle. The table moves through the circular hole in the centre of the scanner.



2. Will there be any discomfort, is any anaesthetic needed?

A CT Scan is a painless procedure, no anaesthetic is required.

The CT machine is open at both ends so patients who are claustrophobic have little difficulty with this test.

3. Preparation for the procedure

The medical imaging department will give you instructions on how to prepare for your scan.

- Please tell the staff if you are or suspect you might be pregnant or are breastfeeding.

4. During the procedure

You will be positioned on the CT table by a Radiographer. The Radiographer will not be in the room during the scan, but they will be able to see you and communicate with you through an intercom.

During the scan, you will hear a whirring or humming noise and you will feel the table move slowly through the CT scanner. You should remain as still as possible, as the slightest movement can blur the pictures.

For some scans, you will be asked to hold your breath for up to 20 seconds.

The whole procedure takes approximately 10 to 20 minutes depending on what part of the body is being scanned.

5. Contrast

You will sometimes be given contrast as part of your CT scan. Contrast allows your organs to be seen more clearly on x-rays. The Contrast can be given as a drink (oral contrast) and / or as an injection (Iodinated Contrast).

Oral Contrast is used to show the stomach and intestines more clearly.

Iodinated Contrast is used to show the organs and blood vessels of your body more clearly. A fine needle (IV cannula) will be put into a vein in your arm, making it possible to inject the Contrast. For more information on Iodinated Contrast and the risks involved in its use, please read the **Iodinated Contrast Patient Information Sheet** (if you do not have this information sheet please ask for one).

6. After the procedure

There are no special instructions after a CT scan. You can eat and drink normally. If you were given contrast, you may feel a slight warmth or a metallic taste in your mouth. This is normal and will disappear quickly. If you were given iodinated contrast, you may feel a slight soreness at the injection site. This will also disappear quickly. If you were given oral contrast, you may feel a slight bloating or discomfort in your stomach. This is also normal and will disappear quickly.

7. What are the risks of this specific procedure?

Common risks and complications include:

- Minor pain, bruising and/or infection from the IV cannula. This may require treatment with antibiotics.

Less common risks and complications include:

- No known less common risks.

Rare risks and complications include:

- An increased lifetime cancer risk due to the exposure to x-rays.
- Death as a result of this procedure is very rare.

Notes to talk to my doctor/ health practitioner about:

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