

Radiology Department

Paediatric CT Scanning

Information leaflet



The Radiology Department has received a request for your child to have a CT scan. This information leaflet will tell you what to expect.

What is a CT (Computed Tomography) scan?

A CT scan uses x-rays to take detailed images of the body. These images are reviewed by a Paediatric Radiologist.

The CT scanner is a large white ring shape, which looks like a 'polo-mint' rather than a tunnel. It makes noises similar to a washing machine.



Why does my child need a CT scan?

Your child may need this scan to show detailed images of part of your their body. The information will then be used to make a diagnosis and to plan treatment.

Can I or a relative or friend accompany my child?

Yes, but for reasons of safety we can only have one person coming into the scan room to give support and encouragement to young children. Pregnant mothers or other children under 16 are not permitted to stay during the scan.

What clothing should my child wear?

Your child may be asked to change into a hospital gown. If they wear loose fitting clothing which does not have metal zips, poppers, buttons or bra clips it may be possible to perform the scan without having to change their clothes.

What happens before the scan?

The majority of children are asked to come to the Children's Day Care Unit, on Level 1 of the Children's Hospital for preparation for the scan and sedation (if required). He/she will then be taken to the CT scanner by the Day Ward staff. Some older children are asked to come directly to CT scanning. Your appointment letter will tell you where you need to go. On arrival in the x-ray department you will be greeted by the CT staff.

Certain scans of the abdomen (tummy area) and pelvis require patients to drink some liquid 30 minutes to 1 hour before the scan. This liquid helps to show up the bowel in the images.

What happens during the scan?

In the scan room the Radiographers will explain the examination and what to expect. You and your child can ask any questions you might have.

Your child will be asked to lie very still on their back or occasionally on their front on the scanning table. The table moves your child's body through the scanner, scanning the relevant body parts. Your child may be asked to hold their breath whilst the scanner takes the images. Please let us know if your child might have difficulty holding their breath.

Will my child need an injection?

Some children will need to have an injection of contrast (x-ray dye) when they are in the CT department. This dye shows up blood vessels and body organs. The needle and tube through which the contrast will be injected is called a cannula and is put into a vein. This is usually a vein in the arm but can sometimes be in the foot. The cannula will normally be put in on the Day Ward before your child comes to the CT department. We can use a skin numbing cream to help with any discomfort when the needle is put in. This is sometimes known as 'magic cream' and works well for most children.

If your child does need an injection of contrast dye we will ask about any medical history of diabetes, asthma or kidney problems.

Your child will be told what to expect during the injection. They will probably have a metallic taste in their mouth and a warm sensation through their body but it shouldn't feel uncomfortable.

How long does the scan take?

The scan usually lasts up to 15 minutes. When the scan is happening, the CT staff can see and hear you and your child at all times via a window and an intercom.

You could be in the department longer if there are emergency patients added to the scanning list. We will let you know if there are any delays.

Can my child take prescribed medicines as usual?

Yes, he/she can take all their usual medicines.

Are there any risks involved?

A CT scan involves exposure to x-rays; this exposure is kept to a minimum by using radiation dose controls on the scanner. These control how much radiation is used when we do the scan,

We are all exposed to normal and natural background radiation from the environment every day of our lives. Medical radiation gives an additional dose; the level of this dose varies with each examination. Your child's doctor has recommended this examination because he/she feels that the benefits of the procedure outweigh the risks of having the scan.

The contrast injection contains iodine, which can cause an allergic reaction in a few people. Please tell the Radiographers if your child has had an allergic reaction to iodine or contrast dye in the past or if they have any other allergies.

Very occasionally, for those who have an injection, the contrast can leak outside the vein and cause temporary swelling and discomfort. In the unlikely event that this happens, we will provide further instructions and advice on what needs to be done.

What happens after the scan?

If your child has had a cannula put in, this will be removed. A dressing will be put on as there may be a small leak of blood or fluid. You can remove the dressing after an hour or so. Your child will be able to go home as soon as possible and carry on with their normal activities.

If your child has an injection of contrast you may be advised to slightly increase the amount of liquid they drink for the rest of the day. This is to help dilute the effects of contrast dye in the kidneys. A few extra glasses of water over the day should help with this.

If he/she is diabetic and taking metformin we will speak to you about the possible need to stop taking metformin for 48 hours after the scan.

When and how will we know the result of the CT scan?

You will not receive the results straight away.

As a general guide:

- If your GP referred your child to us, the report will be sent to the GP practice and you can make an appointment for 10 days later to get the result.
- If a hospital consultant or doctor from the outpatient department referred your child, the report will be ready for their next appointment.

If you or your child have any questions we will be happy to answer them on the day of the appointment. If you need to speak to us before the appointment you can telephone us on the number given on the appointment letter.

More patient information is available on the following websites:

www.impactscan.org/patientguide.htm

Royal College of Radiologists

www.rcr.ac.uk or www.goingfora.com

www.ouh.nhs.uk

www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

If you need an interpreter or need a document in another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01865 221473** or email **PALSJR@ouh.nhs.uk**

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