



Spire Healthcare

Treatment summary

CT scan

About CT scans

Computerised tomography (CT) uses X-ray equipment and a computer to create detailed images (scans) of the inside of your body such as bones, soft tissues and the brain. The images are black, white and grey and can be seen in two and three dimensions.

CT scans can help look for signs of inflammation, disease or cancer and monitor many other health conditions. The images are either stored on film or kept in a digital format and shown on a computer screen.

CT scans are routinely done as an out-patient procedure.

About the procedure

Depending on the part of your body being examined, a dye (contrast medium) may be used to make some tissues show up more clearly. These dyes are harmlessly

removed from the blood by the kidney and passed out in the urine.

If you are having an abdominal or pelvic scan, you may be given a special fluid to drink up to 90 minutes before the scan. The fluid allows the bowel to show up more clearly on the scan.

The scanner is a large machine with a hole in the centre (like a ring). Only the part of your body inside the ring can be scanned. You will be asked to lie on a table that can slide in or out of the ring.

Your radiographer will position the tables so that the part of your body to be scanned is lying in the centre of the scanner. The table will move backwards or forwards very slowly. The X-ray unit will rotate around you to help produce images from all directions.

Your radiographer will operate the scanner from behind a window, and he or she will be able to see, hear, and speak to you during the procedure. It can take several minutes for each image to form and it's important to lie very still during the process.

At certain points during the scan you may be asked to hold your breath or to swallow.

CT scans are commonly performed and generally safe. You will be exposed to some X-ray radiation. Level of exposure is about the same as you would receive naturally from the environment over three years. Pregnant women are advised not to have CT scans as there's a risk the radiation may cause damage to the unborn child.

Complications from a CT scan test are uncommon. In rare cases, it's possible to have an allergic reaction to the contrast injection. Medicines are available to treat any allergic reaction.

Your doctor will explain the benefits and risks of having a CT scan and will also discuss alternatives to the procedure.

To find out more about having a CT scan in a Spire Healthcare hospital, please contact your local Spire hospital.



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