

Patient information factsheet

Having a CT scan

Computerised tomography (CT) is a medical imaging test that uses x-rays and computer software to produce detailed pictures of the inside of the body in cross sections, like slices.

A CT scan can be used to diagnose or monitor many different health conditions. This CT scanner is located in the oncology centre of Southampton General Hospital but provides a medical imaging service to oncology and non-oncology patients.

Before the CT scan

Please call the telephone number on this leaflet if you are, or could be, pregnant as it may not be advisable to proceed with the examination.

If your appointment is for a CT of your abdomen or pelvis do not eat or drink for two hours before the scan. If your appointment is for any other body area you may eat and drink normally.

You should continue taking your usual medications. However, patients on metformin or glucophage must not take these medications on the day of the CT scan and for 48 hours after the scan. These patients will also need to have their renal function checked by their GP prior to attending for the scan.

Please try to be punctual and do let us know if you are unable to attend your appointment.

On arrival

If your appointment is for a CT of your abdomen or pelvis you may be given a flavoured contrast drink. You will need to drink this over some time (30 minutes to one hour), depending on the examination requested.

You may be asked to change into a hospital gown.

You may also need an injection of a contrast agent (liquid) into a vein to show the area of the body being investigated in more detail. If so, it is important to let us know if you have any allergies. The injection may give you a general warm feeling. This goes away quickly.

You will be asked to lie still on the scanner couch while a radiographer takes the CT pictures. The examination takes approximately 20 minutes.

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After the scan

You will be asked to remain in the hospital for half an hour after the contrast injection.

You will need to drink up to two litres of water over the 24-hour period after the scan.

You can resume normal activities immediately after the scan, as there are no after-effects from this examination.

A radiologist doctor will interpret the images of your scan, and a report will be sent within ten days to the requesting specialist, who will give you the results at your follow-up outpatient appointment.

Useful information

If you require transport, please contact your GP surgery to arrange it for you.

Children attending the department must be accompanied and supervised by an adult at all times. Staff are unable to supervise children for you.

Southampton University Hospitals NHS Trust cannot accept responsibility for any loss or damage to personal property.

Please see our website www.suht.nhs.uk for details about parking, facilities and other information.

Department location

CT scanner
CT imaging suite
Oncology centre
B Level
Southampton General Hospital
Tremona Road
Southampton
SO16 6YD

Telephone: 023 8079 4198

Opening hours: Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday from 8am to 5pm. Tuesday from 8am to 8pm

If you need a translation of this document, an interpreter or a version in large print, Braille or on audio tape, please telephone 023 8079 4688 for help.